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PAGE 45

amateur Photographer

FOR EVERYONE WHO LOVES PHOTOGRAPHY, EVERY WEEK!

Saturday 31 July 2010



www.amateurphotographer.co.uk



APOY

PAGE 26

**YOUR WINNING
SUNSHINE PICTURES**



EXPERT ADVICE

PAGE 16

**STEVE BLOOM'S
CLOSE-UP WILDLIFE**



CLASSIC CAMERA

PAGE 59

**THE SUPER-ICONIC
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PAGE 51



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Contents

Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

SUN WORSHIP isn't just for ancient cultures. We still do it, lined up on towels, draped backwards over deckchair frames and with eyes shut, on a bench, snatching a fix in the lunch hour. As individuals we're less connected to the land and the progress of ripening crops, but even in these sophisticated and civilised times, when we pride ourselves on the advancement of humanity and our independence from the natural world, the sun has inescapable power and influence in our lives. No matter how embroiled we are in city life, working all day in air-conditioned chambers, the sun controls our hours, our clothes and our mood.

In built-up areas we don't get to see the sun as it opens or calls time on the day, but away from man-

made obstacles the spectacle is one of the few things we never tire of. Every sunrise and sunset is different, and the drama of the heavens can draw oohs, aahs and the breath from our throats and glaze our eyes. It is humbling to see the sun break the horizon, as it reminds us of our own insignificance next to the magnificent presence of nature.

We publish the results of APOY round 5 this week: a fantastic set of pictures that proves solar veneration is as alive today as when Stonehenge was just an outline in the dust.



Damien Demolder
Editor

NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS

5 NEWS

Leica poised for growth, but scales back UK repair service; Photography a 'priority' in terror law review; Sony to launch interchangeable-lens camcorder; New Benro tripod range

10 REVIEW

The latest books, exhibitions and websites

15 ANDY ROUSE @ AP

Andy Rouse faces a technological dilemma before his latest trip abroad

90 THE FINAL FRAME

The bourgeois is the epitome of good as well as the bad. Let us embrace our label, says Roger Hicks

TECHNIQUE

16 PHOTO INSIGHT

Steve Bloom tells the story of how he took a close-up of a Parson's chameleon and explains how combining colour and texture can lead to brilliant wildlife images



Steve Bloom explains how to use colour and texture in your wildlife imagery

© STEVE BLOOM AND JOHN HALL

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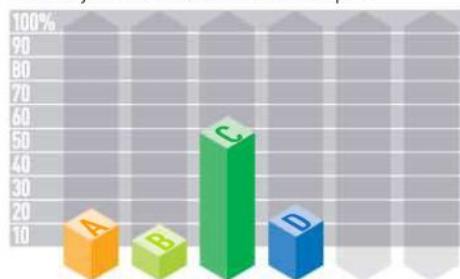
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THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 17 JULY WE ASKED...

Which is your favourite season for landscapes?



YOU ANSWERED...

A Spring	17%
B Summer	10%
C Autumn	55%
D Winter	18%

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

Do you prefer taking pictures at sunrise or sunset?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

P21

Tony Wu on
how he achieves
his stunning
underwater
photographs

13 BACKCHAT

What is photographic vision and do you know what yours is? AP reader Robin Caddy investigates

26 APOY ROUND 5 RESULTS

We reveal the top 30 images from the 'Here comes the sun' round of our Amateur Photographer of the Year competition

34 APPRAISAL

Damien Demolder examines your images, offering words of wisdom and constructive advice

36 SPI SPOTLIGHT

Improve your photography by studying at home with the School of Photographic Imaging

FEATURES

21 UNDER THE SEA

Tony Wu explains how he had to adapt to the challenging shooting conditions to become a successful underwater photographer. Jade Lord reports

TESTS AND TECHNICAL

39 TESTBENCH

Iomega eGo Helium portable 500GB hard drive and Newpro Op/Tech utility strap

40 ELEMENTAL FUGL-E STUDIO KIT 2

Costing just £229, Elemental's FUGL-E lighting kit could be ideal for budding studio photographers. Richard Sibley puts it to the test

42 ASK AP

Our experts answer your questions

45 HASSELBLAD H4D-40

A digital medium-format kit is a dream purchase for many enthusiast photographers. Damien Demolder, Angela Nicholson and Richard Sibley find out how it handles landscapes, still life and studio portraits



51 FAST 100MM TELEPHOTO LENSES

Geoffrey Crawley tests the Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM and Carl Zeiss Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2 optics

59 ICONS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Ivor Matanle takes a look at the Pentax Spotmatic with TTL metering

YOUR WORDS & PICTURES

12 LETTERS

AP readers speak out on the week's issues



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1	Leica CL + 40mm f2 "35mm" Condition = 4* - Bristol Baldwin St.	£499.00
2	Olympus E3 Body Condition = 4* - Bath	£599.99
3	Canon EOS 1Ds Mk II Body Condition = 4* - Cheltenham	£1,299.99
4	Revere Stereo 33 "Rare" 35mm Condition = 3* - Taunton	£300.00
5	Nikon AF-S 300mm f2.8 D II (White) Condition = 5* - Southampton Civic	£2,399.00
6	Leica D-Lux 4 "Digital Compact" Condition = 5* - Derby	£469.99
7	Olympus EP-1 + 14-42mm Condition = 5* - Bristol Horsefair	£479.00
8	Nikon D300 Body Condition = 4* - Manchester	£799.00
9	Leica I1D Body Condition = 4* - Guildford	£299.00
10	Canon EOS 5D Body Condition = 4* - Paignton	£799.00

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APNews

News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 31/7/10

“Use of terrorism legislation in relation to photography... will be reviewed as a priority”

Terror laws under review, page 7



Leica testing gear moves abroad • Minor repair work in UK only

LEICA SCALES BACK UK REPAIR SERVICE

LEICA customers will no longer be able to get their camera equipment repaired in the UK unless it needs only a basic cleaning service or a minor adjustment, AP has learned.

Instead, the gear will be sent to Leica's headquarters in Germany, via the firm's store in Mayfair, where it could take up to six weeks to be fixed and returned to the customer.

The move comes a month after Leica Camera Ltd announced the closure of its base in Milton Keynes, where it has been for 20 years (see *News*, AP 26 June).

AP understands that Leica Camera Ltd has returned all its main camera testing equipment to Germany from where it is set to be sold on to other countries.

A prominent Leica dealer based in central London said that he tried to buy Leica's testing equipment to provide a 'back-up service' for his customers, but was turned

down by Leica management.

'They are buggering up Leica,' he claimed.

We understand from another source – who is close to Leica's UK operation – that only minor diagnostics, sensor cleaning and external lens cleaning will be carried out in the UK, all at Leica's new base in Mayfair.

Rangefinder camera adjustment would be carried out there, for example.

Anxious by the move, two Leica dealers are planning to hotfoot it to Leica's headquarters in Germany to relay their concerns.

'It's rather disconcerting,' said the dealer, who told us that Leica will operate an 'express' repair service for customers at an extra cost of at least '€100'.

A spokeswoman for Leica Camera Ltd told us: 'We are restructuring how we provide service and technical support



in the UK – there is still some internal restructuring and consultation taking place.

'Once this is completed, the company is proposing to cease offering these services from Milton Keynes, and we are creating three new Client Care positions located at our Mayfair offices.'

Leica's move away from Milton Keynes is part of a 'restructure and reorganisation' of Leica Camera Ltd, seen as 'best for the operation of the company'.

We understand that seven staff have been made redundant as a result, a figure yet to be confirmed by Leica.

SNAP SHOTS

Police chiefs have admitted it was illegal for an officer to delete a journalist's photos that he had taken while passing through Waterloo Station in London on 8 May 2009. James Mackay had taken six pictures of Police Community Support Officers apparently detaining a man inside the station when an officer asked him to delete the images because he 'was not allowed to photograph the police'. The photographer said he deleted the pics only because he had been threatened with arrest and was on his way to catch a plane. The British Transport Police upheld Mackay's complaint saying that the media has a duty to take photographs and film incidents, as per guidance agreed between the media and the Association of Chief Police Officers, adding that there are no powers to prevent the press or the public taking photos in a public place.

€5,000 prize for winning pictures
SWEDEN SCOOPS OSKAR BARNACK TITLE

PHOTOGRAPHER Jens Olof Lasthein has won the Leica Oskar Barnack Award 2010, bagging the Swede a €5,000 prize.

Lasthein took the honour with pictures documenting the people of the Republic of Abkhazia in the Southern Caucasus.

Andy Spyra from Germany scooped the

Newcomer Award with a project entitled *Kashmir*.

A record 1,700 photographers entered this year's award.



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A week of photographic opportunity

PHOTODIARY



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Wednesday 28 July

EXHIBITION My View of London (display of competition entries), until 31 July at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, London SE1 7UT. Visit www.myviewoflondon.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** River Thames – Source to Sea (large-scale contemporary photos), until 30 September at Tower Bridge, London. Visit www.towerbridge.org.uk.

Thursday 29 July

EXHIBITION Siren City: Photographs of Naples by Johnnie Shand Kydd, until 12 September at Estorick Collection, London N1 2AN. Tel: 0207 704 9522. Visit www.estorickcollection.com. **EXHIBITION** Straight No Chaser by music photographer Peter Williams, at Sauce Gallery, Birmingham B9 4AA. Visit www.punch-records.co.uk.



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Friday 30 July

EXHIBITION Ali Barber by Richard Nicholson – images from a barber shop transformed into a 'pop-up photographic studio', until 14 August at Four Corners Gallery, London E2 0QN. Visit www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** Photographs of the Rolling Stones at Villa Nellcôte by Dominique Tarlé, until 31 August at Atlas Gallery, London W1U 7NF. Tel: 0207 224 4192. Visit www.atlasgallery.com.

Saturday 31 July

DON'T MISS The National Eisteddfod of Wales 2010, until 7 August at The Works, Ebbw Vale. Visit www.eisteddfod.org.uk. **EXHIBITION** The Family and the Land: Sally Mann, until 19 September at The Photographers' Gallery, London W1F 7LW. Tel: 0845 262 1618. Visit www.photonet.org.uk.

Sunday 1 August

EXHIBITION Paradise Rivers by Carolyn Drake, until 22 August at Third Floor Gallery, Cardiff CF10 5AD. Tel: 0292 115 9151. Visit www.thirdfloorgallery.com. **EXHIBITION** The Last Great Event (pictures from the Isle of Wight Pop Festival) by Chris Weston, until 1 August at Dimbola Lodge, Isle of Wight PO40 9QE. Tel: 01983 756 814. Visit www.dimbola.co.uk.

Monday 2 August

EXHIBITION Wild Kew by Heather Angel, until 5 September at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel: 0208 332 5655. Visit www.kew.org. **EXHIBITION** by Keith Cardwell, during July and August, at Morgan Motor Company Visitor Centre, Malvern Link, Worcestershire WR14 2LL. Visit www.morgan-motor.co.uk.

Tuesday 3 August LATEST AP ON SALE

EXHIBITION Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2009, until 12 September at Winchester Discovery Centre, Hampshire SO23 8SB. Tel: 01962 873 603. Visit www3.hants.gov.uk/wdc.htm. **EXHIBITION** Stateside, includes work by Weegee, Eugene Richards and Lewis Hine, until 18 September at Side Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3JE. Tel: 0191 232 2208. Visit www.amber-online.co.uk.



Firm sees 18% growth in annual sales

LEICA BACK IN PROFIT AND POISED FOR GROWTH

LEICA is back in profit and set for future growth thanks to an efficiency drive and surge in sales boosted by its new cameras, the S2, M9 and X1.

Leica notched up an 18% growth in sales over the previous year – exceeding its expectations – as the firm turned a €5.2m net loss of a year ago into a net income of €3.2m for the year to 31 March 2010.

Leica Camera AG chairman Rudolf Spiller said the news underlines the company's 'development potential'.

'Leica is back again. Innovative technical solutions, outstanding product quality and distinct design... this is what attracts and enthuses an increasing number of consumers worldwide.'

David Bell, managing director of Leica's UK operation, Leica Camera Ltd, said the results were 'both wonderful and crucial'.

He told AP this was a result of the support of customers 'buying into our product innovation'.

Most of the year's sales were generated by products launched within the past ten months, he said.

Bell added: 'For Leica AG to launch three major new system cameras is extremely bold...'

'We now look, confidently, towards photokina. Our company goal remains to be innovative above our weight and continue to surprise and delight.'

'Financially this is challenging. However, our results demonstrate the possibilities and we aim to grow.'

Bell signalled that a company no longer in the red is better placed to fulfil orders for future products. He told us that a shortage of Leica M9 camera supplies was down to a need for Leica to maintain its 'cashflow'.

'We simply cannot manufacture and stockpile new products in quantities suitable



for a worldwide launch,' he explained.

'This highlights the importance of taking the company into profit and we thank our customers for patiently waiting for supplies of cameras like the M9.'

'The good news here is that supplies are improving by the week.'

Spiller continued: 'With its clear course for innovation, and its powerful and efficient structure, Leica has set the course for a successful turnaround.'

'The success has been based on the readiness of both employees and management to support and structure the changes necessary to attain our shared objectives.'

Andreas Lobejäger, who is in charge of Leica Camera AG's finances, said that a combination of 'strong sales growth' and 'significantly increased efficiency' gives Leica 'greater scope for action in financial terms'.

'Leica has markedly improved its working capital, cashflow and equity base,' he added.

Last month, Leica Camera Ltd announced the closure of its warehouse in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.

Leica's product service and support department is set to move to the firm's store in London, as part of an expansion of its Mayfair shop, which opened last year.

The move is part of a 'restructure and reorganisation' of Leica Camera Ltd.

SNAP SHOTS

● Sony is set to launch the world's first interchangeable-lens, HD consumer camcorder boasting the ability to shoot 'DSLR-quality' still images. The 14.2MP Handycam NEX-VG10E features an Exmor APS-C-size CMOS sensor and accepts E-mount and A-mount DSLR lenses, the latter via an optional adapter. Sony is targeting the camcorder at photographers as well as videographers, trumpeting the sensor as 19.5x larger than the standard consumer camcorder sensor. 'This allows users to achieve "cinematic" results with beautiful background defocus (bokeh)', said a spokesman.

● A BA Honours degree in photography by distance-learning has been launched by the Open College of the Arts (OCA). OCA students are not constrained by age limits or the traditional academic years as they are able to enrol any time of year,' said a spokesman. There is no set time limit for completion of the course. Assessment is made through marked assignments, a critical review or essay, and an individual Learning log or 'blog'. Visit www.oca-uk.com or call 0800 731 2116.



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Government to decide whether to roll back police powers

PHOTOGRAPHY 'PRIORITY' IN URGENT TERROR LAW REVIEW



Committed to defending your photographic rights!

USE OF counter-terrorism legislation in relation to 'photography' will be reviewed as a 'priority' as part of a rapid overhaul of anti-terrorism laws, the Home Secretary has announced.

In a statement, the Home Office pledged to review photography and anti-terror laws, alongside legislation regarding the detention of terrorist suspects before charge, and the use of control orders.

Home Secretary Theresa May (pictured above left) said: 'National security is the first duty of the Government, but we are also committed to reversing the substantial



© CHRIS CHEESEMAN

erosion of civil liberties.

'Use of terrorism legislation in relation to photography, detention of terrorist suspects before charge and the use of control orders are among the areas to be reviewed as a priority.'

She added: 'I want a counter-terrorism regime that is proportionate, focused and transparent.'

'We must ensure that in protecting public safety, the powers we need to deal

with terrorism are in keeping with Britain's traditions of freedom and fairness.

'We will look at the evidence presented to us and where it is clear that legislation needs to be amended or powers need to be rolled back, we will do so.'

The news came less than a week after the scrapping of police use of Section 44 of the Terrorism Act (see News, AP 24 July).

It follows a long-running campaign spearheaded by *Amateur Photographer* magazine and taken up by other photographic bodies and publications.

We understand that the issue of photographers and terror laws has been discussed at a high level within the Government in recent weeks.

We have learned that Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, approached Theresa May about photographers' ongoing concerns after lobbying from a photographer who is an avid reader of AP.

PHOTOGRAPHER HELD AMID CHARLES TERROR FEARS



Committed to defending your photographic rights!

A PHOTOGRAPHER was held by police near Buckingham Palace and searched under anti-terror laws, accused of displaying suspicious behaviour in front of Prince Charles.

Jules Mattsson, 16, who has declined to speak publicly about the incident, was pounced on by an armed undercover police officer while photographing a cadet unit on The Mall on 6 July.

Mattsson is understood to have been acting on the belief that he had been given permission to photograph the cadets prior to the event. But a Royal Protection Unit officer swooped on the photographer when he tried to take pictures of cadets saluting Prince Charles during a march past.

Mattsson (pictured) is then understood to have been dragged through a crowd of spectators and stopped and searched under Section 43 of the Terrorism Act.

We understand that the photographer was later told he was in a 'sterile' area, close to a member of the royal family, and had not gained prior permission to be there from event organisers.

By law, Section 43 requires an officer to suspect someone of being a terrorist when they stop them.

Met Police later said that no offences were apparent and no action was taken.

A few weeks ago Mattsson won widespread public support after police had stopped him taking pictures of police cadets in Essex last month.

Mattsson, pictured earlier this month at a peaceful gathering of photographers outside Scotland Yard



NATIONAL TRUST IN PHOTO RIGHTS U-TURN



Committed to defending your photographic rights!

THE NATIONAL Trust did a dramatic U-turn after it banned pictures of a popular Devon beauty spot from a prestigious landscape photography competition.

The climbdown came despite the trust repeatedly insisting it was not prepared to allow pictures of the National Trust-owned Lundy Island in Devon to be entered into the Take a View Landscape Photographer of the Year contest, under strict rules that ban commercial use of photographs taken at its properties.

It seemed that the trust's rulebook extended to an entire island when the National Trust Photo Library told a photographer that it 'couldn't agree to these images being used in conjunction with advertising for the competition and/or their sponsors'.

Rules for the Take a View contest, which has now closed for entries, limited future use of entries to purposes 'connected with the competition'.

However, mindful of the National Trust's history of protecting picture use, the photographer – who declined to be named – had thought it prudent to check whether her images complied with the rules.

In an email from the National Trust, the prospective entrant was told the contest's rules did not comply with its own terms.

Shortly afterwards, in a complete reversal, the National Trust's director of communications Ivo Dawney overruled the decision when contacted by AP.

He said: 'We do have a rulebook about what is and what is not allowed, which has a rationale intended to protect our interests. However, in a case like this we are happy for the photographs to be used.'

The National Trust bought Lundy Island in 1969. The trust charges adults £29.50 for access to the island, a fee that includes the price of the ferry ticket.

AP
THIS
WEEK
IN...

1906

Cameras for travel were on the rise on the Continent where a 'scattered force of sharp-shooters may be found at work, snapping and snapping', observed AP. 'Never a steamer goes forth from Dover to Calais [that does not] bear its burden of cameras: big, little and medium-sized... and a correspondingly enormous freight of exposed films... The Continental tourist who has no camera is getting as rare as – well, getting so rare that we needn't bother about him...'



CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

HAMPSTEAD PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

A 'visiting' member of Hampstead Photographic Society managed to scoop five awards at the society's annual competition. American photographer Marcia Dillon won titles including the award for best monochrome print. Among the regular members claiming prizes – preventing Marcia achieving a clean sweep – was the society's programme secretary Richard Lansdown, who bagged the Print Photographer of the Year title. The society meets on Tuesday evenings from 7 September. Visit www.hampsteadphotosoc.org.uk or call David Reed on 0207 722 2907.

SNAP SHOTS

● An amateur photographer from Kent, who said photography helped improve his memory after a car crash, has had his photos displayed in the House of Commons. Craig Semplis told us that his local MP, Teresa Pearce, asked him for photographs of local views to hang in her office. Craig said: 'After many years of trying and wondering if I was really any good... it comes as a great surprise – and a confidence boost – to finally have someone other than my family or close friends compliment my work...'

● A new photography gallery has opened in Nottingham. The Nottingham Photographic Contemporary Art Gallery opened with a display of work by photographers Jennifer James, Rebecca White and Paul Storer. The gallery is located at 358 Aspley Lane, Nottingham NG8 5GB.

● Tripod maker Benro has announced the availability of its FlexPod series. The FlexPod tripods come in four models, two made from carbon-fibre and two from aluminium alloy. The FlexPod Aluminium, for example, costs £119.99. Visit www.benro.co.uk or call 01793 615 836.



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Train images are fine, says firm

RAIL FIRM BACKTRACKS

A RAIL firm has been forced into an embarrassing climbdown – and to make an apology – after a passenger was told he faced arrest under anti-terror laws for taking pictures on a train.

Nigel Roberts, 41, had taken photographs with his mobile phone on a Weymouth to London train to highlight what he saw as overcrowding and potential danger caused by heavy luggage in the aisles.

Roberts claimed that, in an emergency, passengers would not have been able to get out of the train and he raised his concerns with a ticket inspector, showing him the pictures.

However, the inspector said Roberts risked being arrested under anti-terrorism legislation and threatened to call police.

The guard told Roberts that, under the Terrorism Act, he was not allowed to take pictures on any trains.

'But this is not the case,' a



AP RIGHTS WATCH

Committed to defending your photographic rights!

South West Trains spokeswoman told *Amateur Photographer*: 'This was clearly a misunderstanding. These pictures were not a threat to the public. As far as we are concerned, people can take pictures on our trains.'

South West Trains admitted that the train had been crowded with people, who had been on a cruise, returning from Southampton.

The train company said it has now issued a written apology to Roberts.



© NOLAN MARK

Scuba snap triumphs in contest

UNDERWATER PHOTO WINNER

A PHOTOGRAPH entitled 'Into the Deep' (see above) has triumphed in an underwater photography competition centred on the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel.

The winning image, by Mark Lavington, shows a fellow diver descending into Lundy's Marine Conservation Zone.

'This competition is a great way to showcase the stunning variety of marine life that live in the waters around Lundy and highlights what a magical destination it is for divers,' said Nicola Saunders, a Lundy warden.

The contest formed part of Lundy's Splash-IN weekend last month.



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50mm f1.4G AF-S - £305

85mm f3.5G AF-S VR - £379

105mm f2.8G AF-S VR - £619

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190CXPRO4 £214

055XPROB £115

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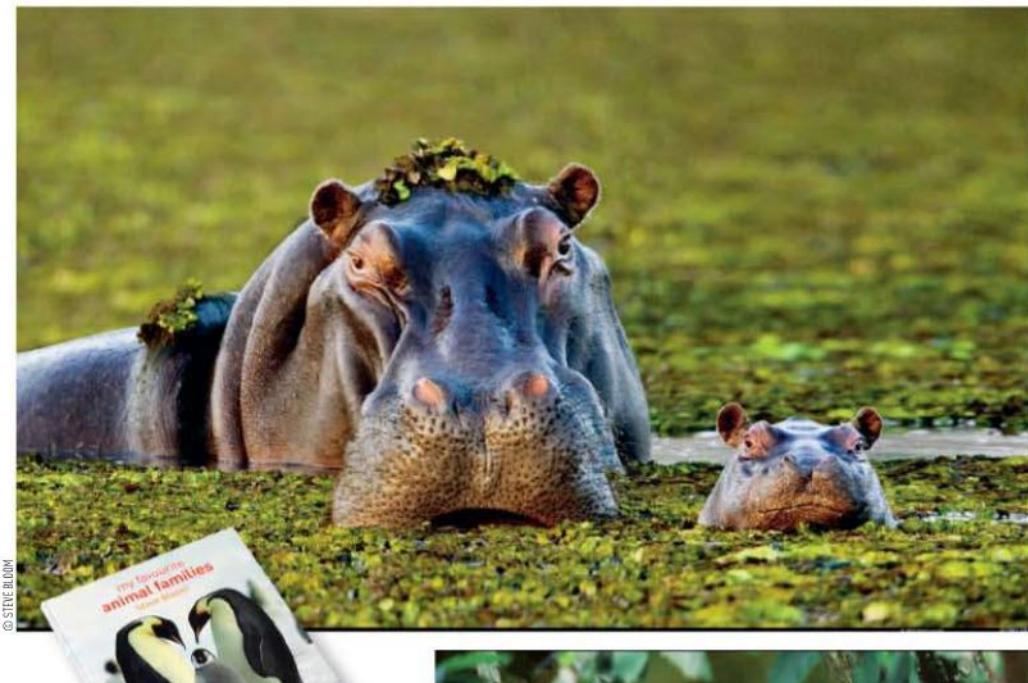
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APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jeff Meyer

My Favourite Animal Families

By Steve Bloom. Text by David Henry Wilson
Thames & Hudson, hardback, 64 pages, £9.99, ISBN 978-0-500-54390-0



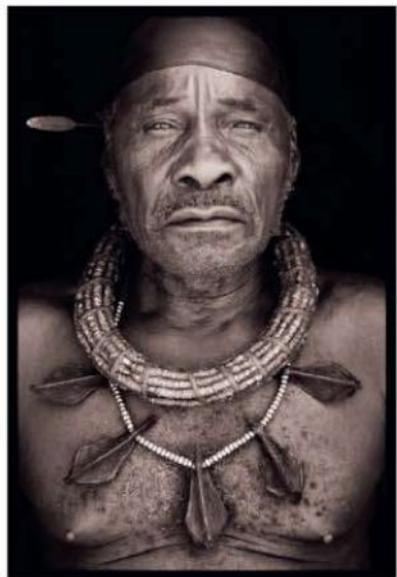
BOOK



PERHAPS inspired by the lovely series of children's books by the wonderful photographer

Andrew Zuckerman, AP's own wildlife master Steve Bloom (also wonderful) has released this splendid little book for kiddies. From the African plains to the Arctic ice, Steve has captured the cuteness of baby animals with much aplomb and presented in such a way that even a family of hippos elicits an, 'Ahhh'.

Full of baby animals at play or lounging with mummy, these images lack Steve's usual flair for the dramatic. Big, bold action shots these are not. But for those of you with young children, this is a great book to help bridge the gap between your hobby and all those stuffed animals on your kid's bed. All the popular species are included, and who knows? You may just inspire your son or daughter to trade in Bob the Builder for their first camera. Now just watch how expensive birthdays and Christmases get!



EXHIBITION

Sub-Saharan Journeys: Ethiopia and Namibia

By John Kenny
Until 31 July. 3 Bedfordbury Gallery, 3 Bedfordbury, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4BP. Tel: 0207 836 0824. Website: www.3bedfordbury.com. Open daily noon-6pm. Admission free

TRAVELLING since 2006 through Sub-Saharan Africa's remote villages, John Kenny has returned to the UK to exhibit his portraits of nomadic peoples from Ethiopia and Namibia. Unlike other images we've seen of people from this region, Kenny takes his subjects out of their environmental context and places the emphasis on their personalities. You might be forgiven for assuming he ushered his subjects into the studio, but actually he uses no flash or reflectors. Taken inside village huts, Kenny used only natural light reflected up from the ground. Because of this you can see Kenny reflected in each of his subject's eyes. Look out for an interview with Kenny in a future AP.



East to East

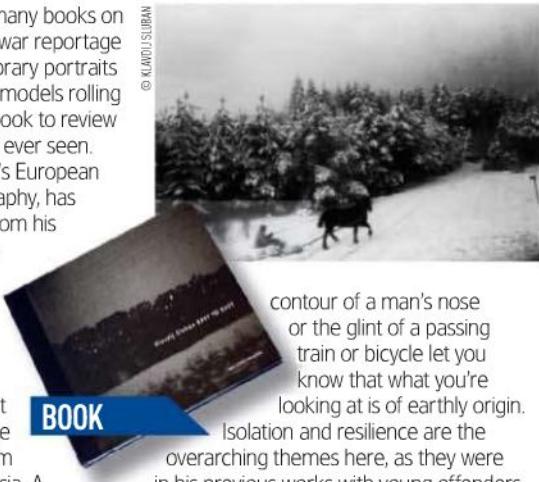
By Klavdij Sluban

Dewi Lewis Publishing, hardback, 116 pages, £25, ISBN 978-1-904587-84-2



WITH so many books on landscapes, war reportage or contemporary portraits of po-faced models rolling in, it's very rare that we get a book to review that is unlike anything we have ever seen. Sluban, the winner of this year's European Publisher's Award for Photography, has produced a series of images from his travels tracing the route of the Trans-Siberian Railway that is so breathtakingly original one needs a linguist before even beginning to describe it.

A French photographer of Slovenian origin, Sluban sought to document the lives of people beyond Europe in the cold, grim landscapes on the border of Asia. A skilled black & white printer, Sluban captures this melancholy mood with deep blacks, backlit silhouettes and heavy grain – almost the opposite of the heavy processing that seems to be the standard these days. Often only small shafts of light illuminating the



BOOK

contour of a man's nose or the glint of a passing train or bicycle let you know that what you're looking at is of earthly origin.

Isolation and resilience are the overarching themes here, as they were in his previous works with young offenders in prison – a project celebrated by the likes of Cartier-Bresson himself. *East to East* is a stunning achievement and thrusts Sluban, who is still just in his 40s, forward as one of the most important contemporary photographers.



© KLAUDIJ SLUBAN

WWW.FAMOUSPICTURES.ORG

WHILE perhaps not the slickest web design in these days of Flash animation, Famous Pictures is nevertheless a fantastic resource whether you're a picture researcher or just interested in the story behind many of the world's most famous images. Presented as a sort of Wikipedia entry for images, readers first see a thumbnail of the famous shot (with a link to a hi-res version) along with an extended caption outlining where and when the picture was taken and who took it. The articles then segue into stories about how the images were made, what became of the subjects and, in many cases, the

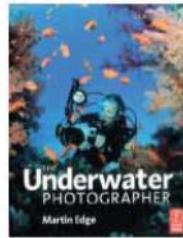


photographer. What's more, many entries contain alternate versions of the image, which is a real treat. Famous Pictures is the perfect stop for a spot of lunchtime reading.

WEBSITE

CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books and DVDs on the market



● **THE UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHER** by

Martin Edge, £24.99

Those inspired by Tony Wu's underwater work in this week's issue (see pages 21-24) can learn all the ins and outs of his trade in this handy guide. With huge chapters on lighting and framing, and interesting discussions on using negative space, this looks to be the definitive guide for underwater enthusiasts. ●



SEARCH FOR THE AFGHAN GIRL

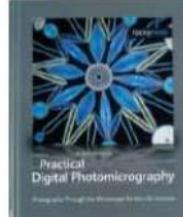
Running time 52mins, £7.99

A compelling, but ultimately confounding, story of Steve McCurry teaming up with forensic scientists to go back to Afghanistan 17 years later and find the Afghan girl whose portrait made both McCurry and the plight of the Afghan people famous. In terms of drama, it has you on the edge of your seat as they search for one woman among millions. But when they locate her and examine her moles and irises, you can't help but think, 'What's the point here?' In what way does Sharbat Gula benefit from this? ●



100 YEARS OF BOXING by various, £14.99

Hum. Boxing is always going to produce dramatic images given its inherent violence, but a whole book of them? If you're not a fan of boxing you might find this a bit repetitive. ●



PRACTICAL DIGITAL PHOTOMICROGRAPHY by Dr Brian Matsumoto, £53.99

A fairly slim 176-page book for its price (which is half the cost on Amazon at the time of writing), it nevertheless walks the walk. Intensely technical, Matsumoto explains everything you need to know to take pictures of microscopic objects with your digital SLR.

Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3) fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication

LETTER OF THE WEEK

A NEW APPROACH

From time to time we have a debate in the columns of your magazine about the pros and cons of film and digital, and one element of the pro-film argument runs along the lines that by having a restricted number of shots a film photographer is made to think about the image more than a trigger-happy digital photographer. Well, I've found a middle way. If you commit a classic mistake and depart on a trip without a charger and a partially discharged battery, it really does put you under pressure to think about the shots, settings and compositions before you turn the camera on! I've just done this and it was an eye-opening experience, not least because I had to wait until I got home to view the film-sized number of images I'd ejected out of the battery.

Mark Cresswell, via email

The road to enlightenment looks different to us all, Mark. Yours, though, is truly unique – Damien Demolder, Editor

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 4GB media card*



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THE SOCIAL RECORD

With reference to Catherine Wilson's *Backchat* in AP 10 July, I can certainly relate to some of the situations she describes. I have several 2 1/4in square photographs that were contact prints from 120 roll-film negatives (I couldn't afford an enlarger at that time). These were produced in a darkroom that was in the airing cupboard and my fingers were stained from handling Johnson's MQ developer (most unhealthy). But looking at them now, about 50 years later, they represent a valuable history of my teenage years and my first involvement with photography, which still continues – though now all digital. These first, very amateurish

attempts, with trees growing out of heads and huge amounts of sky with very little space left for the subject, are priceless records of an earlier era and I feel they capture life as it really was. I would not clone anything out of them for the world.

Things have moved on, however, and I must confess to the occasional use of the Clone tool along with some other adjustments that are possible using today's image-manipulation programs. I was reminded, when reading Catherine's description of a classic wedding pose, of the opportunity I had three years ago while photographing a friend's wedding. I remembered seeing two or three poses of

distant relatives more than 100 years ago with the man sitting and the wife dutifully standing, so I decided to replicate it. The main problem was keeping a sense of Victorian dignity and aplomb on the part of the subjects and wedding guests, but having eventually achieved it I then printed the shot using a sepia effect and was quite happy with the result.

I agree that we should not clone out our existing social history, but we should bear in mind that whatever we do to manipulate our modern-day images will go on to form part of our future social history.

Ian Newman, via email

Pictures have one purpose at the time of their taking and quite another when they are 50 years old. Finding a balance that satisfies both isn't straightforward and will lead to a compromise of one sort or another – Damien Demolder, Editor

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY DAY

We appear to be living in an age of fear. Your photographers' rights lens cloth, for which I am most grateful, goes some way to indicate the problems that the street photographer is up against. Can't we put a positive spin on taking pictures in the street? After all, the archive value of such work is immeasurable. How about a National Street Photography Day? It could run alongside a competition that is split into all manner of groups, from architecture to portrait and so on, so that no aspect of 'the street' goes unnoticed. The inclusiveness of such an event is endless as the opportunity for taking street pictures is open to us all, whether you carry a camera or a mobile phone. In a nation that abounds in CCTV we, the photographers, should reverse this negative attitude to street photography so that the public and police embrace the opportunity of having their picture taken.

Michael Vine, via email

A good idea – Damien Demolder, Editor

PRESENTING THE FACTS

I think AP does an excellent job of presenting the facts, figures, information and ideas, but when will people stop moaning about what you have done for them? In AP 17 July, your letters page included not one but four letters all moaning about something or other that you have presented. You do a great job and must include all the good and bad things about photography, including costs (affordable or not), viewfinders (disappointing or not) software (familiar or not) and compatibility (OEM or not). Keep up the good work!

Nick Toulson, Cornwall

I am extremely sorry, Mr Toulson, it won't happen again – Damien Demolder, Editor

GET OFF THE FENCE

I don't get the urge to write very often, but the copy of AP 17 July I received through my subscription had me both amused

What The Duck





PLEASE EXPLAIN...

In AP 10 July, Dave Smith's star letter asks a question about whether Maciej Dakowicz needed permission to take his photographs, at the end of which you say that no permission is needed for this type of picture, but you do not explain why. Is that because he did not get paid for having his photographs used, or is it because it is news?

Jez Martin, Dorset

No permission is needed for an editorial-type picture taken in a public place. If Maciej went on to sell the shot to a manufacturer of pink cowboy hats for an advertising campaign, it would become a very different story – Damien Demolder, Editor

and confused. I freely confess to being an opinionated person, and am happy to offer my strongly held views on politics and religion to anyone who will listen. That I have such strong opinions means I have trouble understanding why people don't have strong views. I am all for sitting on the fence where I don't have an opinion, but would never presume to offer my views on such an occasion as there is no opinion to offer.

It is for this reason that I was put into stitches of laughter by the survey results for the question: 'At £644, is Adobe Photoshop CS5 too expensive?' Unsurprisingly, 95% of people thought it was, but it was the 1% of people who took the effort and time to go online, locate the poll, apply some thought process to the question in hand and then answer 'Don't know' really got me thinking. I know that statistics can be twisted and questions phrased to lean respondents towards an expected result, but this question seemed quite clear and 99% of people had given a clear response. Is this a common response pattern? How can we tell? In order to investigate this further, could I request that next week a new survey is run as follows with results printed the following week: Have you ever answered 'Don't know' in any single-issue opinion poll? a) Yes, b) No, c) Don't know

Ben Pike, Bedfordshire

In my limited experience, I have found that it is not uncommon for those who really do not know to be forceful in an

opinion that suggests that they really do. A lack of conclusion, brought about either by lack of evidence or qualification to analyse it, is as valid a standpoint as any – and often one more difficult to admit – Damien Demolder, Editor

LICENCE REQUIRED

Charlie Hamilton James's kingfisher images (AP 10 July) are quite spectacular and, as he admits, are the fruit of a lifelong obsession. I'm slightly concerned, however, that your interview with him neglects to inform readers that kingfishers are a protected species. Charlie will have obtained a licence to photograph nesting birds.

Brian Taylor, via email



BACK CHAT

AP reader Robin Caddy thinks that we should each try to develop our own photographic vision

OPEN any book or magazine dedicated to photography and sooner or later you will be confronted with a discussion or definition of the photographer's vision. We are urged to develop our vision, and can perhaps feel that we should be able to articulate it verbally. If we cannot there is a tendency to feel inferior to those who can. Allow me to make some assumptions. Most of us will not have studied art or art history at degree level; some of us would not even go so far as claiming much artistic ability in the traditional sense. Few of us are experts on styles of painting or the different trends in the art world. So how can we explain to others our artistic vision if we lack the tools to do so?

Let's take a step back and look at what photographic vision is. Put simply, your photographic vision is unique to you.

Imagine a dozen people photographing the same subject. Imagine the differing angles, perspectives, compositions and printing methods. It is unlikely that the end result would be a dozen identical photographs. Imagine now those 12 photographers choosing their own subject matter. How much more variety would we see then? (If proof of this were needed, simply study the AP *Spotlight* over a number of weeks, and the *Masterclass* articles too.)

This, then, is your vision – the unique way in which you choose your subject, the way you frame it, the placement of focus, the tonality you choose, your processing, the way you print it. Every step in the process is determined by what you think works best, by what you feel. Should we be surprised that to describe such personal feelings in words is difficult? It is almost a futile task, as futile as trying to describe the face of a loved one to someone else. Photography is about light, and technique of course. But it is also about emotion and personality.

Is this a call to abandon education? To avoid learning, to dumb down photography? Not at all. Strive to learn, consider your own work and others' responses to it. Have an honest approach to your subjects and do not be afraid to be unique in your style. Too many of us have too often sought merely to reproduce great photographs we have seen. We can learn technique from this, of course, but we cannot be said to be creating our own work if we are copying something we have seen. I have just been flicking through a book of coastal shots that includes work by Joe Cornish, David Noton and Paul Wakefield. I can tell more often than not (without looking at the captions) who took which photograph. This is due to their consistency of vision. We may wish our pictures were in the same league as theirs, but we can never achieve that if we do not have our own style.

So as we seek to grow a vision and an understanding of what makes us tick photographically, do not despair if you still cannot articulate this verbally. Let the picture do the talking, and remember, as Lewis Hine said, 'If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug a camera.'

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AndyRouse@AP

Thoughts from a wildlife
photographer's world



ANDY'S dream development may not be quite as far away as he fears, as 64GB CompactFlash and 8GB

Wifi SD cards are already on sale. And, according to CompactFlash Specification Revision 5.0, we could soon see cards with capacity greater than the previous 137GB limit. For the moment, however, the cost of such a high-capacity CF card is off-putting. SanDisk's 64GB Extreme Pro, which is UDMA 6 compatible and has a read/write speed of 90MB/s, for instance, retails for a hefty £558.99. Bearing in mind that a 256MB card cost over £100 just six years ago, it won't be too long before a 64GB card becomes a readily affordable option.

Eye-Fi's Connect X2 SDHC cards are capable of uploading images direct to a computer via a compatible wireless network. If Andy uses cameras such as the Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, he could save his raw files to a CF card, while his JPEGs are stored on an Eye-Fi SDHC card ready to upload as soon as he enters a Wi-Fi zone.

As for backing up images automatically, this is currently possible using software that is often provided with external hard drives. Seagate's FreeAgent GoFlex drives, for example, are supplied with Seagate Dashboard, which simplifies backup schedules and even allows the backup to be encrypted so that only those in the know can access the images.



ANDY ROUSE is one of the world's most prominent wildlife photographers and a passionate conservationist. A professional photographer for more than ten years, he has a dozen books to his name and regularly appears on TV. He has also won multiple wildlife photography awards. In this weekly column, Andy recounts some of his experiences from the wildlife world. You can see his work at www.andyrouse.co.uk and read his blog at www.andyrouse.co.uk/blog.asp. You can even become a fan and keep up to date with 'Andy Rouse Wildlife Photography' on Facebook.

Andy faces a technological dilemma before his latest trip

TROUBLE WITH TECHNOLOGY



© ANDY ROUSE



HERE'S a call to all inventors out there. Please develop a 120GB CompactFlash card that self-downloads itself wirelessly from anywhere in the world, no matter how remote, to my home drives and then creates three backups. Not too difficult, surely, for a geek of high standing in geekdom?

But why am I asking for this, I hear you ask? Well, I leave for Alaska (and then Galapagos) soon and will be spending a few weeks on a ship. Weight is a major consideration as I will be transferring by floatplane, and my MacBook Pro laptop, at a whopping 2.3kg, is just too big to go. I have used this for the past few years but weight is becoming an increasing issue with air travel. I love using the MacBook as it gives me the flexibility to edit my work while on the move; it also helps to quell the mistrust and doubt that my paranoid photographer mindset likes to remind me of from time to time – did my beloved images download correctly? Am I sure that the picture of a bear sniffing my foot taken with a 10mm lens is safe and sound? Well, using my laptop I can check that my precious images have been downloaded from the card to the backup drive, and then ensure that my second backup matches the first. However, due to weight, the laptop is out, so what other choices do I have?

One option that I did consider, albeit for the length of time it took me to see the price, was to buy a new MacBook Air. It

Andy finds his laptop invaluable for checking that his images have downloaded properly. However, weight is a major consideration and impediment

weighs in at only 1.3kg so that would tick the weight and size issue. I only need it for travel backup so do not worry about the connectivity issues of only having a single USB, although my workflow will now have an extra step as I will have to copy each CF card to the hard drive, unplug the card reader, plug in the drive and copy the images across from the drive. I can handle that. My main issue here is cost: the MacBook Air is an expensive machine and I will need to also buy some editing software too. At a time when a double-dip recession may be a reality, shelling out £1,500 could just be a step too far. I don't think Apple would loan me one – I'm not Mr Stephen Fry, after all!

So I have two sensible options left that I am looking into: dusting off the mothballs on my trusty Jobo Giga Vu Evolution downloader; or getting one of the new and cheap Netbooks. The Jobo is a great device but I stopped using it when the MacBook Pro came travelling. It does the download job well, and is small and light too, but it isn't that robust so I will have to take a backup for it plus disks too. On the Netbook side, for £250 I could get a laptop that would be small, light and would do the job I needed, albeit slowly. My concern is that I heard at a conference about claims that mining in parts of the Congo for some components used in Netbooks (and some phones) are causing conflicts with the local wildlife. Since the Netbook seems to be the best option for me I will need to do some more research on this, as I would not buy anything causing issues for my beloved gorillas. It's a difficult conundrum. Of course, it would be easily solved if Steve Jobs would release the NetMac that everyone is crying out for. Does anyone fancy giving him a nudge and telling him I need it by next month? It's worth a beer or two from me.



PHOTO INSIGHT



STEVE BLOOM

The world's leading wildlife photographer is bringing his expertise to AP. Steve has written dozens of books on wildlife photography



To see more images by Steve visit www.stevebloomphoto.com. Signed copies of Steve's book *Untamed*, published by Abrams and priced £29.95, are available from www.stevebloomshop.com

Steve Bloom tells the story of how he took this intriguing close-up of a Parson's chameleon and explains how combining colour and texture can lead to brilliant wildlife images

I TOOK this image of a Parson's chameleon in Madagascar while I was working on my book *Untamed*. I'd been photographing lemurs and other primates when a little girl came up to me carrying this huge chameleon, which she wanted me to photograph. Intrigued by the textures and how they created this wonderful mosaic on the skin, I threw down my camera bag and pulled out my Canon EOS-1Ds camera with a 180mm macro lens. The details were so fascinating and had so much potential that I knew I had to get a close-up shot.

I'd just bought the EOS-1Ds camera, which marked my switch from film to digital imaging – an important moment in my photographic career. While there was time to set up this shot (I was not under the same sort of pressures I would be when photographing stampeding wildebeest or a prowling lion, for example), I still had to act fast. The chameleon might have become impatient and started tossing its head if I'd taken too long.

I don't usually use tripods, but on this occasion I felt it was necessary. I set up my camera and asked the girl to hold the chameleon as steady as she could while I took several shots in portrait and landscape format. I photographed from three-quarter angles as well as from the side, but in the end I felt shooting the chameleon side-on in landscape format gave the strongest, most immediate and impacting composition.

The depth of field in macro photography is very shallow, but you can use this to great effect if you think carefully about your shooting angle. The more of an angle you are to your subject, the more the focus drops off around the edges, but when you shoot directly from the side it's easier to get the majority of the subject in focus.

The way you frame a shot tells a particular story. I chose to frame this shot deliberately tightly. If I had photographed the whole head, the overall effect would have less impact. Including only a part of the chameleon in the frame stirs interest in the viewer, causing them to question what



© STEVE BLOOM

they are looking at. By coming in close I've been able to draw attention to the variety of textures on the skin. It's the detail that makes this shot. An image with lots of intricate detail blows up beautifully into a large print.

Eye contact is integral to any animal portrait. It can reveal a great deal about an animal's character. The eye also provides a natural point of focus, which, from a compositional point of view, is very useful. Artistically, the animal's eye can lead to a variety of aesthetically interesting images. The diversity of animals' eyes is quite astounding – there are so many different colours, patterns and details that you can use to form brilliant compositions.

The strength of this image owes a

great deal to how the image has been composed. The composition complies with the traditional Rule of Thirds. The eye – the focal point of the image – falls in the top right-hand third and the line of the mouth neatly runs along the bottom third of the frame. The result is a composition where the individual elements work together to form a harmonious whole, which is easier for the viewer to navigate.

This is one of my more popular images, which may be due to its graphic appearance. The graphic look of the picture is largely due to the interlocking scales that stand out when photographed at such a close range. You can see every bump of the rough skin, and the wizened layers that are bunched up around the chameleon's



eye socket are really prominent, adding character to the photograph. The creature looks almost alien and the overall image reminds me of an aerial view of some strange alien land with a volcano.

It is remarkable how chameleons change colour to suit their surroundings. You can see the lighter green of the background, which contrasts nicely with the more piercing emerald green of the chameleon's skin.

Colour is a key component in this picture. The closer you look, the more differentiation you can see between the subtle shades of green, yellow and brown. The interplay of light and colour is also an important factor. If the light had been contrasty, you wouldn't be able to make out these minute differences in colour.

'The light accentuates the bumpy, uneven textures, helping to create a three-dimensional quality'

Here the soft light creates a dappled effect. Some areas of the chameleon's face are more illuminated than others, and looking closely, you can see that the light accentuates the bumpy, uneven textures, helping to create a three-dimensional quality. I love using natural light in my images and fortunately on this occasion there was plenty of it. I set my camera to ISO 100 and shot at f/16.

It's more difficult to avoid camera shake

when using a macro lens and handholding the camera. Even the smallest amount of shake will show in the image. But making sure your arms are pulled closely to your body and breathing out as you press the shutter can help you prevent this from happening. You could also try crouching down to take the shot, keeping your arms firmly pressed against your sides, which should give added stability.

We live in a photographic world where it's easy to rely on Photoshop. There is a danger of 'overworking' images, so I try to keep any editing to a minimum. In my view, Photoshop is a tool and should not be a substitute for creativity. **AP**

Steve Bloom was talking to Gemma Padley

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Under the sea

He spends most of his days diving in tropical seas, photographing alien-like creatures, but to become a successful underwater photographer **Tony Wu** had to adapt to the challenging shooting conditions water presents. **Jade Lord** reports

FINDING yourself inside the mouth of a gigantic sperm whale, floating adrift at sea or running out of air while diving at depth are not risks a photographer is normally required to take. Yet for American photographer Tony Wu, such hazards are all part of the challenge in his quest to capture stunning scenes below the ocean's surface.

'It's a bit more complicated photographing in the water because your time is limited by the amount of air you carry and the time you can stay at a given depth without risking decompression sickness,' explains Wu.

However, these dangers are not evident in his photographs – Wu captures the magic of the marine world perfectly in vibrant Technicolor, belying the immense skill that is demanded in both diving and photography.

'Some images, from the time of conception to actually getting the image I envision, have taken me years to get right,' says Wu, who started his career in finance before becoming a professional photographer. 'When you find yourself with the opportunity to photograph something

really pretty or unusual in the water, it may be the only chance you'll ever have.'

As a result, getting the perfect underwater shot requires huge amounts of preparation and inside-out knowledge of your camera settings. Wu has travelled the world to destinations such as Malaysia, the Maldives, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, photographing for corporate clients in the imaging and travel industries. Each time he knows how the subject behaves, how the currents will be running, where the sun will be setting and, most importantly, the exact camera settings to maximise his chances of getting a successful shot.

'Knowing your settings is paramount,' explains Wu. 'I have a ritual that I follow: depending on the ambient conditions and subject, I'll decide in advance what my "jump settings" [the setup of the camera as he jumps into the water] are, deciding the aperture, shutter speed, ISO, flash settings, focus point and focus system that I think will give me an OK result if I suddenly have to turn and shoot without warning.'

It is this ritual that has enabled Wu to capture scenes that would be lost through a moment's hesitation. Unfortunately for him, his experiments to reach his current point came before he switched to digital imaging. It cost him time and money in the form of tens of thousands of wasted film exposures.

Thankfully, shooting with a digital camera has enabled him to see results immediately and also enabled him to share images in real-time through his blog and social networking sites such as Flickr and Facebook. Today, he shoots with a series of Canon DSLR bodies: the EOS 5D Mark II, EOS 7D and EOS-1D Mark IV. For Wu, the capability to shoot high-definition video is increasingly important within his work and at this stage Canon is the best choice, enabling him to shoot 1080p video. Each camera body is kept safe within underwater housings manufactured by Zillion in Japan or Seacam in Austria, both of which allow full functionality of all camera controls. Wu says that both housings have their strengths, 'so it's nice to have

Sperm whale in profile. When shooting subjects against a blue background, Tony underexposes the background by 2 stops and lights the foreground slightly over neutral

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 15mm, 1/400sec at f/5, ISO 200



ALL PICTURES © TONY WU

 a choice of tools for each situation.' In the past, he has also used Nexus, Sea & Sea and Subal housings.

As lenses cannot be changed underwater, Wu's decision on what lens to dive with comes from experience and understanding the characteristics of each lens. 'Deciding which lens to use is not that different from making the same decision on land. Underwater, perhaps one additional consideration is that it helps to understand the behaviour of your chosen subject and also the prevailing water conditions,' he explains. The Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L USM optic provides Wu with good all-round zoom capabilities, while the Canon EF 14mm f/2.8L USM offers unique results thanks to its very wide perspective. Fisheye lenses are also a favourite, with the Canon EF 15mm f/2.8 fisheye and Tokina 10-17mm f/3.5-4.5 AF DX fisheye the models he enjoys using. Wu finds that their inherent distortion is not a limiting factor when underwater.

'Most people are unfamiliar with underwater scenery,' says Wu, 'so having

'There's not as much light underwater, at least compared to what we're used to on land. The deeper you go, the less light there is'

a bit of distortion isn't as apparent as it would be with land photography. Plus, the closer you can get to your main subjects underwater, the better. Fisheye lenses allow you to get really close.'

Wu's extreme close-ups of sea life are also achieved using a Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 USM macro and a Sigma 50mm f/2.8 EX DG macro. His choice of macro lens is again influenced by the behaviour of his subject matter.

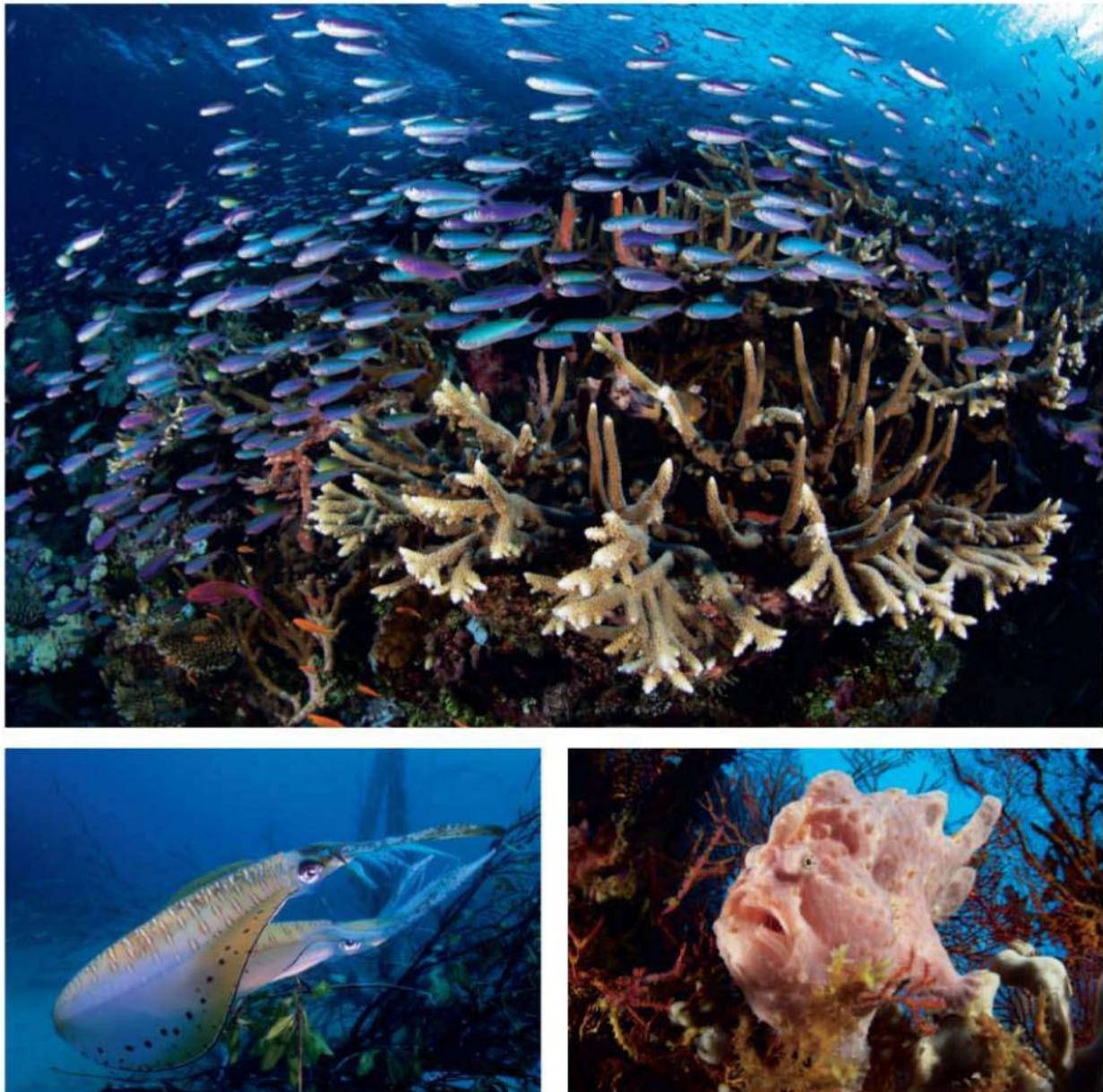
'I need a relatively wide and relatively narrow macro lens for different subjects, depending on their size and shyness,' explains Wu. 'If you're going to shoot macro images, you really should have proper macro lenses. There are zoom lenses that claim to be able to shoot macro images, but those will never provide results like a true macro lens.'

Of course, getting close and staying close to your subject underwater has a lot to do with your skill as a diver. 'It's really important to hone your diving skills,' he advises. 'No matter what kind of camera you have or how good or expensive your kit is, if you're not in control, you will not get good photos in the water. If you're completely comfortable and have time to concentrate on composition, lighting, technical settings and such, you're much more likely to nail a beautiful shot.'

Mastering your diving technique, then, as well as understanding your camera and subject matter are key if you want to achieve crisp, clear shots. Yet all these skills are wasted if you don't understand one crucial element: light. And light in water behaves very differently to light on land.

A playful juvenile male Australian sea lion in the waters off Carnac Island near Perth

Canon EOS 5D, 17-40mm, 1/250sec at f/10, ISO 200



Top: A swarm of purple anthias fish streaming over pristine coral
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 15mm, 1/200sec at f/8, ISO 100

Above left: Two male bigfin reef squid square off to win the right to mate with a female
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17-40mm, 1/200sec at f/5, ISO 320

Above right: A pink frogfish in the Eastern Fields of Papua New Guinea
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17mm, 1/60sec at f/8, ISO 200

'There's not as much light underwater, at least compared to what we're used to on land,' says Wu. 'The deeper you go, the less light there is. I tend to stick above 25m in depth, which also helps avoid decompression sickness.'

Objects under water also appear closer and bigger than they really are, so what might appear two feet away will actually be more like three feet away. To ensure you don't have images where the subject is lost in the distance, Wu says you need to use your diving skills to get as close to the subject as possible. Having to get close to your subject is also forced by the fact that water is denser than air, so any artificial light used won't be as powerful in water as it is on land. Wu uses Itron Z220, Z240 and S2000 flashes to avoid the blue and green colour casts that can occur.

'There's not a lot of colourful light from the warm end of the light spectrum (red, orange and yellow), and the deeper you are, the more pronounced this is. So most of the time you need to add artificial light to bring

out warm colours,' says Wu. Photoshop plays little part in his work, as he prefers instead to get it right in-camera, using flash and getting close.

Shooting in manual mode enables Wu to get that 'pop' of a bright subject against a generic blue background by underexposing the background by two stops and lighting the foreground slightly over neutral. Manual mode is also essential for dealing with rough conditions.

'If you let the camera decide your settings, it might not pick the best ones to compensate for swell, waves or other rough conditions,' says Wu. Having control over the shutter speed and increasing it, if the conditions permit, can minimise camera shake and ensure a sharp image in rough seas.

So how does Wu deal with the problem of making a constantly moving subject appear sharply in focus? For this he switches to autofocus and allows his camera complete control over all the AF points, concentrating on getting the subject in frame without worrying about



A dragon moray eel Canon EOS 5D, 100mm, 1/200sec at f/18, ISO 125



'If the water is really rough, sometimes it's just not possible to take nice photographs'

 focus when his subject is darting about. If the circumstances allow, he'll also shoot using one AF point, locking on to a point close to what he wants to be in focus and then recompose.

'One thing I advise people to try to avoid is using the centre AF point and having the centre as the point of focus all the time,' explains Wu. 'In many instances, doing this makes for a great photo, but always doing so makes for monotonous images.'

Wu's photographs are anything but monotonous. Being able to travel to remote destinations such as the Eastern Fields (a system of submerged reefs halfway between Papua New Guinea and Australia), he is able to share scenes that only a handful of divers get to see each year.

'The reefs in the Eastern Fields are pristine, with so many fish and such healthy corals that it's difficult to describe in words,' he reveals. 'The Lembeh Strait in Indonesia is also one of my favourite places to document marine life: there are few places on the planet with such a variety of alien-looking animals in relatively easy diving conditions.'

Travelling the world in search of the best marine life might seem like a glamorous existence, but rigorous amounts of research and planning are needed for such trips, and over-zealous customs checks at airports can often hamper the experience. And sometimes even the most seasoned of photographers has to admit defeat against the perils of Mother Nature.

'If the water is really rough, sometimes it's just not possible to take nice photographs,' he says. 'Knowing when not to fight a losing battle is important,' he concedes. But sometimes you just have to be stubborn, have patience and keep trying until you succeed, because for Wu nothing beats the unique experiences he is fortunate to have.

'Going to a place like the Eastern Fields puts into perspective how magnificent the underwater world, when left untouched by people, can be.' **AP**

Colourful, cute subjects like this baby longnose cowfish are always popular, says Tony
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 100mm, 1/60sec at f/6.3, ISO 160



BUDGET DIVES

You don't have to be a professional diver to get great underwater photos – a snorkel can sometimes be all you need to get started.

'A snorkel is great for keeping up with fast-moving animals and open-ocean subjects like dolphins and other cetaceans, or for shallow reefs with lots of light,' says Wu. Here he shares his tips for amateurs looking to try their hand at underwater photography.

- 1 Start with a compact camera and buy an underwater housing for it. Many compacts provide excellent photos with a basic setup and although there is a quality difference between compacts and DSLRs, there's a substantial difference in the amount of investment required.
- 2 If you get hooked, add additional light with an external flash. Light disappears quickly underwater, so adding flash will have an enormous effect on how colours appear in your photos. Many underwater flashes sync with built-in flashes on compact cameras, making them easy to set up and use.
- 3 If you want to get close or go wide, then invest in some add-on lens adapters to give you the ability to take macro or wideangle photos. Going wider can give your subject some environmental context, while a longer focal length will help you catch finer details.
- 4 Catalogue your images using software such as Aperture or Lightroom, as a lot can be learned just by going through a daily editing process. Over time, the knowledge and experience gained really add up.
- 5 Travel to places that are easily accessible and well established, such as the Maldives, the Red Sea, the Caribbean, the Great Barrier Reef or Phuket in Thailand. These places tend to have predictable marine life, good local guides who can show you what's around, decent infrastructure and regular flights to get you to and from the locations.

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APOY 10

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

In round five we were inundated with
your blinding pictures of the sun

Michael Marsh, of Kent, wins first place in our **Sunrises, sunsets and sunny days** round of APOY 2010. Michael will receive Canon's EOS 550D plus EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM kit lens, worth £1,699.98. Ideal in low light, the 18MP EOS 550D offers an ISO range of up to 6400 – expandable to 12,800 – for those environments where using flash is undesirable. Other features include Full HD movie capability, a 3in LCD and a Quick Control screen. The all-purpose EF-S 18-55mm lens boasts a 4-stop Image Stabilizer and tripod detection.

Our second-place winner is **Mirela Bogdan**, of London, who will receive Canon's IXUS 105 compact camera, worth £189. The 12.1MP IXUS 105 brings a combination of ease of use, high image quality and design that stands out from the crowd. Along with a 28mm wideangle lens, it boasts face detection, auto redeye correction and motion-detection technology.

Emily Wuetcher, of Kentucky, USA, finished third and receives Canon's 10MP PowerShot A495, worth £119. This easy-to-use digital compact boasts a 10MP sensor with 3.3x optical zoom and a Smart Auto Mode, which uses scene-detection technology to determine the shooting scene from subject brightness, contrast, distance and overall hue.

The leader board

Remember that while these are our Round 5 results, a hardware error means the Round 4 results have yet to be published. In other words, it is still early in the competition, and if you're not on our leader board you still could be. There is plenty of time for positions to change. That said, we had a stunning array of entries in Round 5, **Here Comes the Sun**. This month we didn't see too many changes in the top ten. **Michael Marsh** makes his first appearance on the back of this round's win, while **Simonas Valatka** also makes his debut.

Look for our delayed results of Round 4, **In Bloom**, in our 21 August issue, with results from Round 6 the following week.

1	Dan Deakin	142pts	6	Ricardo Alarcon	78pts
2	Martin Greškovič	134pts	7	Michael Marsh	77pts
3	Jan de Brauw	105pts	8	Sean Slevin	75pts
4	Lee Jeffries	100pts	9	Mark Crocker	71pts
5	Adrian Hall	87pts	10	Simonas Valatka	70pts



1 Michael Marsh
Kent 42pts
Canon EOS 5D, 24-105mm, 1/200sec
at f/8, ISO 250

Michael and his wife had taken their youngest son (seen on the far right-hand side with spiky hair) to New York City for his birthday. This was shot on Christmas Day and it was very cold,' says Mike. 'Feeling the festive spirit had passed us by, we went for a walk. I had been looking straight into the sunlight when I strayed behind the pillar, which became a giant diffuser for both my eyes and my camera, enabling me to capture the smoke and steam being enhanced by the rays of the sun. **Judges say** This is quite simply a fantastic shot, aided by stunning light and depth of field. Even from the crisp silhouettes and details shrouded in mist, this could only be New York City.



Second
prize



2 Mirela Bogdan

London 40pts

Canon EOS 450D, 18-55mm, 1/3200sec

◆ Mirela says she loves experimenting with angles, light, shade and reflections, and her ethos is that beauty is very often right in front of you if you look closely. This is a small tennis and basketball court that she passes everyday on her way to work. 'The light and emptiness of the place caught my attention one morning, and I felt compelled to freeze this moment,' Mirela says. 'The surrounding fence really contributed to the mood because of its geometric shape.' Mirela took several shots, but chose this version because she liked the light and tones. Later she converted it to sepia and increased the contrast. **Judges say** Mirela has captured a wonderful exposure and created a strong, graphic image. The light is fantastic, and this is a scene that most people would have ignored.



3 Emily Wuetcher

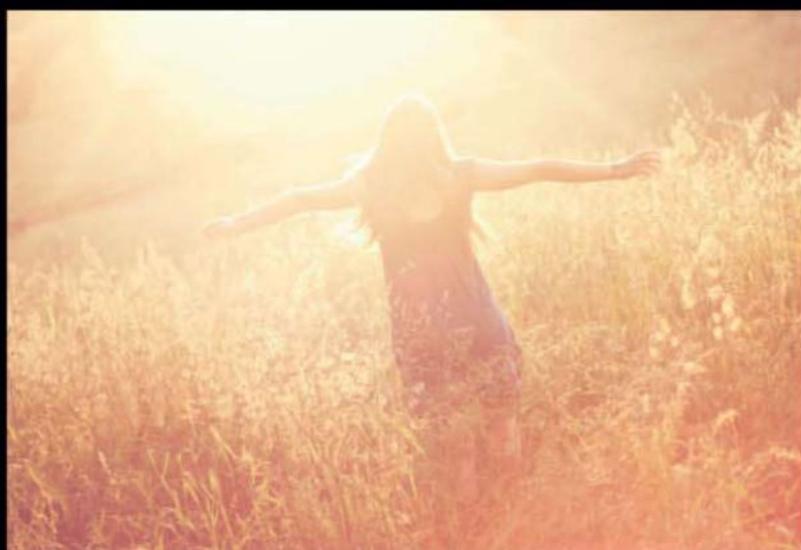
Kentucky, United States 39pts

Canon EOS 450D, 1/2500sec at f/1.4, ISO 200

◆ Emily, who lives in Kentucky in the United States, makes a point of using only natural light in her photography so the majority of her shooting takes place a few hours prior to sunset. People framed by warm, golden skies are some of her favourite images to take and 'always create beautiful, magical photos.' For this image, Emily shot straight into the sun, filling her frame with atmospheric light that creates a soft halo around her subject.

Judges say Emily has created a stunningly atmospheric image, which wasn't easy to do. She showed great skill by shooting directly into the sun to capture this interesting take on this round's theme.

Third
prize



Round 5 results Sunrises, sunsets and sunny days



4 Lee Jeffries Lancashire 38pts

Canon EOS 5D, 85mm, 1/5000sec at f/2, ISO 400

Beggar praying in a doorway in Rome **Judges say** This is so well seen and executed. Despite just a small shaft of intense light, we know exactly what this scene is

5 Marcin Bera Dorset 38pts

Nikon D200, 18mm, 10secs at f/8, ISO 100

Sunset next to pier **Judges say** Marcin has captured amazing depth, and we also like the parallel lines in the pier and sun trail

6 Martin Greškovič Bratislava, Slovakia 38pts

Nikon D80, 17-50mm, 1/60sec at f/11, ISO 100

Light shining through abandoned house **Judges say** Martin has pulled off a tricky exposure to capture loads of atmosphere

7 Deba Prasad Roy Kerala, India 38pts

Nikon D90, 18-105mm, 1/60sec at f/4.5

Alleppey Beach, Kerala, India **Judges say** Deba's lone figure adds another mystical quality to this eerie, otherworldly image

8 Gig Binder Gloucestershire 38pts

Olympus E-3, 14-54mm, 1/60sec at f/5.6

'Taken in Holland before sunset, everything glowing from the late evening sun' **Judges say** Gig's image puts the viewer right in the middle of this scene. Stunning light and atmosphere poke our senses, letting us feel the breeze and smell the air



9



10



11



12



13

9 Phan Hien An Giang, Vietnam **38pts**
 Nikon D70S, 18-70mm, 1/125sec at f/10, ISO 200
 'The aftermath of a flood near my home' **Judges say** In addition to stunning light, Phan's image is perfectly composed

10 Adrian Campfield Kent **37pts**
 Sony Alpha 100, 18-55mm, 1/200sec at f/13
 Two horses on a foggy morning **Judges say** Adrian's classic composition lends to the overall tranquil mood of this scene

11 Mark Crocker Bristol **37pts**
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/125sec at f/11, ISO 100
 Shot at Marine Lake in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, at sunset **Judges say** Mark has captured the perfect silhouette. A timeless image

12 Sean Slevin Co Wexford, Ireland **37pts**
 Canon EOS 500D, 28mm, 30secs at f/18, ISO 200
 'Morning papers' **Judges say** Sean has used a very clever interpretation of the theme to create this moody image

13 Sebastian Sasiadek London **37pts**
 Casio Exilim EX-Z55
 Park **Judges say** Sebastian managed to capture this stunning atmospheric light using a digital compact camera, showing that it's not always about equipment, but rather a keen eye and some help from the sun

Round 5 results Sunrises, sunsets and sunny days



14 **Dan Deakin** Nottinghamshire **36pts**
 Nikon D200, 10-20mm, 1/13sec at f/14, ISO 400, ND grad
 Ferry approaching the Island of Pangkor, Malaysia **Judges say** Dan's clever use of leading lines takes us from the rocks in the foreground, down the pier and out to the sun



15



16

15 **Malcolm Tabberer** Cornwall **36pts**
 Canon EOS 400D, 70-300mm, 1/50sec at f/9, ISO 100
 'Just after sunset on Dartmoor' **Judges say** Malcolm has very skilfully used the light to turn this oft-photographed landscape into a more abstract image



17



18

16 **Gary Telford** Lancashire **36pts**
 Sony Alpha 700, 135mm, 1/1600sec at f/3.5, ISO 200
 Man sunbathing in the hot weather at Blackpool seafront **Judges say** On the surface this is a humorous image, but apart from being well spotted this is also the perfect exposure and impeccably composed



20

17 **Martyn Civil** South Yorkshire **35pts**
 Nikon D70, 105mm macro, 1/8000sec at f/2.8
 Silhouette at sunset **Judges say** Martyn has clearly put a lot of thought into his composition. We love how the sun nearly fills the width of his frame



21

18 **Warren Chrisman** London **35pts**
 Canon EOS 7D, 24-70mm, 1/100sec at f/22, ISO 100
 Coney Island, New York City **Judges say** Warren has made clever use of leading lines and has achieved wonderful colour tones in the harsh sunlight

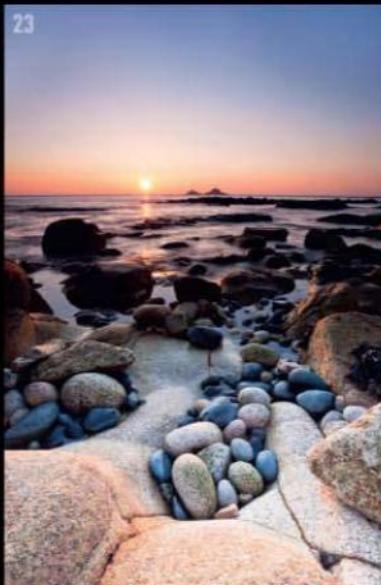


22

19 **Dave Wilcox** Essex **34pts**
 Canon EOS 40D, 17-85mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100
 'The Twisted Oaks of Mundon' **Judges say** Dave has used what little light there was to create a strong silhouette

20 **Max Brockman-More** Wiltshire **34pts**
 Nikon D50, 50mm, 1/500sec at f/11
 Pewsey Downs, Wiltshire **Judges say** Max has cleverly waited for the sun to fall behind the cloud, softening the light but creating a more mystical mood. We also like the panorama

21 **Simonas Valatka** Vilnius, Lithuania **34pts**
 Canon EOS 400D, 17-70mm, 1/2500sec at f/8, ISO 800
 Sahara Desert, Morocco **Judges say** Yet another great silhouette. We like how Simonas has used the camels small in the frame to emphasise the expanse of the location



22 John Boteler Oxfordshire **33pts**
Cannon EOS 5, 500mm
Farne Island at sunset **Judges say** John has carefully composed this image to avoid overlap of his subjects. Very well done

23 Jonathan Horrocks Surrey **33pts**
Canon EOS-1Ds Mark III, 17-40mm, 1.3secs at f/18
Porth Nanven, Cornwall **Judges say** Strong foreground interest, perfect sun – Jonathan has captured a classic British scene

24 Marek Troszcynski London **33pts**
Nikon D300, 70-200mm, 1/125sec at f/2.8, ISO 800
A murmuration of starlings over the old pier in Brighton
Judges say Marek has captured wonderful colours in the sky, which serves as a stunning backdrop to his silhouettes

25 Peter Clark Manchester **33pts**
Canon EOS 400D, 18-200mm, 1/500sec at f/10, ISO 200
Bridge over the Nile **Judges say** This is another strong sunset silhouette, shot at the perfect angle to keep the lampposts from overlapping each other

26 Chris Haydon Bedfordshire **33pts**
Canon PowerShot G9, 1/160sec at f/4.8, ISO 100
Mavisehir, Turkey **Judges say** This is a beautiful, timeless image due in equal parts to stunning light and Chris's composition

27 Adrian Hall Surrey **32pts**
Canon EOS 50D, 10-22mm, 1/16sec at f/11, ISO 100
Southerndown in South Wales **Judges say** Adrian has captured a stunning reflection of the sky, which complements the setting sun

28 Gary Cox Gloucestershire **32pts**
Canon EOS-1D Mark III, 70-200mm, 1/250sec at f/16, ISO 200
Church at sunset **Judges say** Gary has framed this very well to capture the bright sunlight glinting off the church bell

29 Gautam Basu West Bengal, India **32pts**
Nikon F80, 28-100mm, 1/250sec at f/11
'An early morning cyclist travelling along a village path in the Purulia district of West Bengal, India' **Judges say** Gautam has used three elements to create a simple, but balanced and ultimately pleasing composition

30 Neal Reed Oxfordshire **32pts**
Canon EOS 350D, 17-70mm, 1/15sec at f/8, ISO 100
Vapour trail at sunset **Judges say** An interesting take on the theme, and a very well-seen image. We like how there's just enough light to tell that this is a VW van





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Production started in the late 70's and discontinued in 1997. The Noct-Nikkor offered here is the last type to be made, the AI-S version. The AI-S version has 9 aperture blades versus 7 blades in the AI version. MINT £3000.00



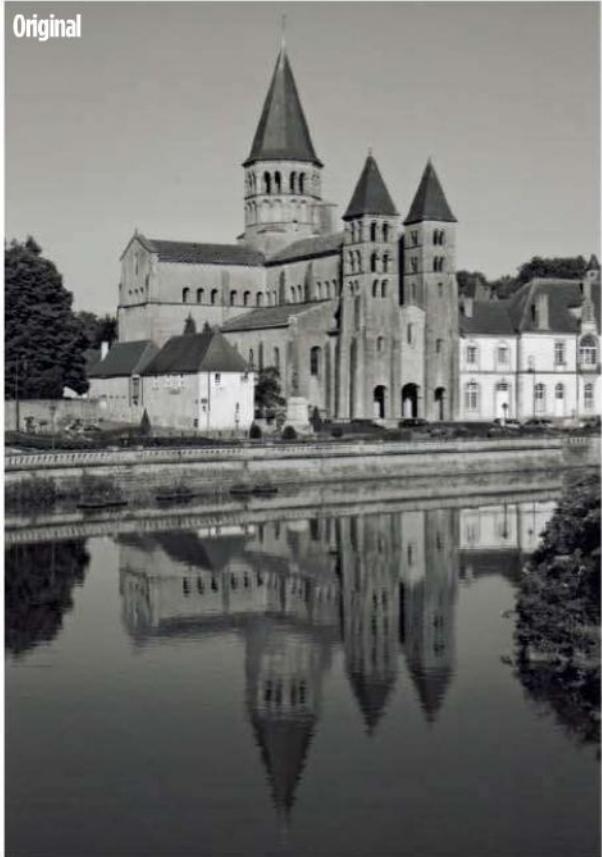
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Appraisal



Expert advice, help and tips from AP Editor **Damien Demolder**

Original



Edited



Paray-le-Monial, France

Philip Bovey

Linhof Technikardan, 80mm, 1/30sec at f/16

GETTING buildings straight at close range is not an easy feat, and here, in his picture of the Paray-le-Monial, Philip employed some genius to solve the problem. By stepping back one invites more foreground into the picture, which can often distract from the subject, but using that foreground to reflect the subject keeps the subject prominent in the picture while adding an extra wow factor.

Philip has produced an extremely detailed picture using his Linhof Technikardan large-format camera that is filled with masses of information. You can see the tiles on the roof and the texture of the leaves in the hedges, but while it is technically excellent it needs something else to lift it a little.

Our common sense will have no trouble determining that it is the big building with towers that is the subject, but there are few

visual clues for our eyes to direct us to where we should be looking. There is too much to distract us around the main subject, and while it is great that we can see the surroundings, they need to be knocked back into the background so that a sense of priority can be established.

It is a simple matter, and here I have used the Burn tool to darken shadows around the edge of the frame by 8%. I also used it for deepening shadows on the building, but complemented it by use of the Dodge tool to lighten highlights. In doing so I've created extra contrast in the subject, making it more three-dimensional. I've also pushed the edges of the picture out of the limelight, and darkened the reflection so that it adds to the subject rather than taking away from it. Now it is a bit clearer where we should be looking.

'You can see the tiles on the roof and the texture of the leaves in the hedges, but while it is technically excellent it needs something else to lift it a little'

WIN

Damien's picture of the week wins a £50 Jessops store voucher*. The two runners-up each win a £25 voucher* to spend on photobooks from Jessops' online service at www.jessops.com. *UK residents only

How to submit your pictures

Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (please include the original files from the camera along with your submitted versions on your CD). Tell us a little about the pictures and, if you can, include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your photographs to 'Appraisal' at our usual address (see page 3). Please enclose an SAE if you would like them returned.

Miners' Track, Snowdon

Adrian Beasley

Konica Minolta Dynax 7D, 18-50mm, 1/10sec at f/22, ISO 100



Original

SNOWDONIA is such a wonderful place to take pictures, as is clearly demonstrated here by Adrian and his picture of the Miners' Track at the base of Mount Snowdon.

Although he says he took the image at 6am, he doesn't say at what time of year. For such warmth in the light the sun would have been up for about an hour, so it must have been mid-summer. He has chosen a fantastic view and created this intriguing symmetrical composition of the rocks and their reflections in what I guess is Llyn Llydaw. While all the ingredients are there for a striking picture, Adrian has been dazzled by the colours and the reflection, and forgotten to allow enough contrast for us to be able to make out clearly what is going on. There is plenty of detail, but the midtones are too close together, and the blacks and whites are too sparse for our eyes to be able to grasp shapes and form.

With a simple S curve aimed at the centre of the Curves line, I have separated the midtones a little. Then, with the Burn tool,



Edited

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

I have accentuated the shadows in the scene to lend them weight and to give three dimensions to their corresponding objects. The scene is very colour-saturated, but it is the dominance of yellow that is most confusing. Using the Hue and Saturation window I've reduced the saturation of yellow and shifted its hue to introduce more

magenta/red, making a more realistic colour.

We should also remember that a reflection would never be as bright as the object it is reflecting, so avoid lightening them. Here I have darkened the area of water to allow what is real to stand out and what is reflected to play second fiddle. It is a great photograph, though, and Adrian has done well, which is why I have made it my picture of the week.

The Lane

John Farley

Canon EOS 400D, 22mm, 1/50sec at f/4.5, ISO 400

IT SEEMS strange to see snow scenes in July, but I suppose it helps us to appreciate how beautiful the weather is now and remember how amazingly cold it was last winter. John has sent me a collection of snow scenes from the lanes and fields near his house, and they all share the theme of trees silhouetted against a pale background. They also share a too-blue colour balance and a degree of underexposure brought on by the camera meter reacting to the brightness of the snow. On these occasions we have to take control, to tell the camera to allow the snow to be white – both through our exposure and white balance. Set +1.5EV exposure compensation and take a custom white balance reading from a clean patch of snow.

John's original is, I'm afraid, a bit dreary, so the first thing I did was lighten it in Levels. The sky has now lost its features, but that's fine because that's how the sky looks on a snowy day, while the midtones now show a bit more detail. Using the Saturation slider, I reduced the overall strength of colour to try to remove that blue/cyan cast, and I added a touch of warmth by selecting the red and blue channels in Levels to add a tiny amount of red and yellow to the midtone areas. This has given the trees and bushes a brown tone, which I think is probably quite realistic. The end result is warmer and more friendly, and generally more pleasing to the eye, but John's original composition is great – with the overhanging trees making a lovely frame.



Original



Edited

TOP TIP

Camera exposure meters are not designed with snowy scenes in mind. Be aware of when you are photographing in exceptional situations, and take control of the exposure yourself.

SPI Spotlight

Improving your photography can be a difficult undertaking on your own, and attending a college or university isn't always a viable option. So why not study at home with the School of Photographic Imaging and learn at your own pace?

THE SCHOOL of Photographic Imaging, or SPI, is AP's acclaimed home study photography course. It involves correspondence learning supported by personal tutors and allows you to learn at your own pace.

At the School of Photographic Imaging we like to encourage and reward our students by offering them the recognition they deserve and by giving them the opportunity to have their images published.

The three students featured on these pages have been selected by their tutors as having understood the course and then demonstrated their ability in order to achieve these outstanding photographs.

It just goes to show that with the right guidance, great photography is possible. Why not sign up to the course and join us?



Andy O'Farrell
Buckinghamshire

ENROLLED ON Diploma in Digital Photography EQUIPMENT Canon EOS 40D

‘Although I have been interested in photography for about two years, I find the SPI course is giving me a proper grounding in the basics – the mix of practical assignments and theory is just right. The added support of the forums and a knowledgeable tutor are an excellent way to expand my understanding of photography.’

Taipei
1 ‘This was taken in the early morning in Taipei, Taiwan. My work takes me to some interesting places and every morning while in Taipei I walked the streets photographing daily life’
1/8sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

Miss Hannah
2 ‘Taken late afternoon in the shade after a day at the swimming pool’
1/90sec at f/6.7, ISO 100





3



Dave Whigham
West Yorkshire

ENROLLED ON Diploma in Digital Photography
EQUIPMENT Canon EOS 5D Mark II and EOS 40D

'I started using a digital camera in 2007. The immediacy of digital imaging and the fact that I could process my images with a degree of predictability and consistency grabbed me from the start. It was this latter element that led me to the SPI course. Probably like many others, I'd learnt some really great techniques by rote but not fully understood why they worked, which then makes it harder to adapt the techniques. The Diploma in Digital Photography has given me just what I was looking for and I've seen my technical skills improve markedly.'

Sunset Lesson

3 'I took this on Bamburgh Beach, Northumberland, with my back to the castle. I was admiring the sunset as this chap and his daughter wandered into the frame'
1/125sec at f/10, ISO 400



Jon Cole
Buckinghamshire

ENROLLED ON
Diploma in Digital Photography
EQUIPMENT Olympus E-3

'I decided that I needed to get to grips with the digital age, and since starting this course I have learned a whole range of image-enhancement techniques. This has increased my interest in photography to a huge extent. Almost incidentally, simply because of the need to avoid submitting embarrassingly bad images to my SPI tutor, I have learnt how to take greater care over taking pictures and how to be a bit more creative.'

Tension

4 'This shot was set up indoors, in front of a window with daylight ambient lighting. I set a customised white balance and used a conventional macro lens set at a small aperture and slow shutter speed'
1/6sec at f/22, ISO 100, tripod



About the SPI

The School of Photographic Imaging, in association with Nikon, is one of the largest and most vibrant photographic home study course communities around. The courses are informative and fun, and guide you through everything you need to know to take and process images of the highest quality.

Each course has easy-to-follow, step-by-step guides for each module and a professional photographer as a personal tutor, giving students the support and guidance needed to take their photography to the next level.

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61cm (24") roll	£89.00
Matt Plus 240 gsm	
A4, 100 sheets	£25.00
A3, 50 sheets	£26.00
A3+, 50 sheets	£36.00
61cm (24") roll	£64.00
Photo Matt Canvas 350gsm	
A4, 10 sheets	£16.00
A3, 10 sheets	£27.00
61cm (24") roll	£107.00
111.8cm (44") roll	£193.00
Digital Transfer Film/OHP	
A4, 10 sheets	£16.00
A3, 10 sheets	£27.00
Test Packs	
A4 Inkjet, 30 sheets	£14.00
A4 Fine Art, 20 sheets	£20.00
A3 Fine Art, 20 sheets	£36.00
A4 Canvas, 18 sheets	£17.00

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AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's **equipment tests**, **reader questions** and **technique pointers**

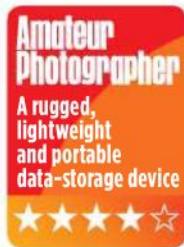


Iomega eGo Helium portable hard drive 500GB £79.99

For more information visit www.iomega.com

WITH many photographers choosing laptops over desktop computers, a portable solution to hold the vast amount of data amassed by memory-hungry digital photographs is much more useful than a desktop unit. Weighing just 0.2kg and measuring 121x88x16mm, the Iomega eGo Helium portable hard drive holds up to 500GB of data (around 200,000 photos at 2.5MB per JPEG using a six-million-pixel camera). Its solid aluminium construction and Drop Guard technology enable Iomega to claim it can withstand damage from a drop of up to 51in (1.3 metres). The USB 2.0 interface has a file transfer rate of 480MB/sec. A triple interface 500GB Mac version with FireWire 800/400/USB 2.0 ports is available for £99.99.

I was impressed by Iomega's size and weight, considering it is such a large-capacity portable drive. I found its ruggedness makes it ideal when on the move. Red and blue versions are available, but I preferred the silver model as it matches my Mac PowerBook laptop. This is a good addition for the photographer often on the move and is reasonably priced, too. **Tim Coleman**



The AP guarantee to you

All our tests are conducted by people who understand the product area, as well as photography. We aim to discover any shortcomings, as well as finding those aspects that deserve praise. All our tests are thorough, honest and independent

Newpro Op/Tech utility strap (sling version) £29.99

For more information visit www.newprouk.co.uk or call 01367 242 411

THE NEWPRO utility strap is designed to be worn across the shoulder with the camera resting near the hip. What's different with this strap is that, by using the system's Uni-Loop connectors, the camera glides up the strap for quick access. This means the strap can remain in the same place on your shoulder when both shooting and resting. The connectors can be fixed to most cameras, configured with other straps in the range and can simply be unclipped when you don't need to use the strap.

I used the strap with a Canon EOS 5D Mark II and Nikon D300S, and found the combination of neoprene comfort-stretch binding, plus the resting place of the camera next to my hip comfortable. Sitting next to the hip and with the Uni-Loop gliding up the strap, the camera is immediately ready to hand. However, I found the straps can obscure the back of the camera, especially in portrait format. **Tim Coleman**



FORTHCOMING TESTS

In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry...

Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ10

We test Panasonic's 12.1-million-pixel compact camera with a 25-300mm Leica lens

AP 7 August

PhotoKey 3 Starter Kit

Shoot and cut out objects easily with this software and greenscreen kit

AP 7 August

Samsung EX1

A 24-72mm f/1.4-2.8 lens, 10MP, raw format and an articulated AMOLED LCD screen, what more could we want from a compact?

AP 7 August

Budget full-frame

Playing the waiting game could save you a fortune when buying a full-frame camera. We take a look at some great options

AP 28 August

Nikkor 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 vs Tamron 70-300mm f/4-5.6

Tamron's latest lens is tested against a Nikon favourite

AP 28 August

Elemental FUGL-E Studio Kit 2

Costing just £229, Elemental's FUGL-E lighting kit could be ideal for budding studio photographers



Richard Sibley
Technical writer

RECENT years have seen an avalanche of entry-level studio lighting kits on to the market. Helped by the falling cost of studio equipment and the immediacy of digital cameras, the once intimidating and expensive art of studio photography is now within the grasp of amateur photographers.

Elemental is the latest company to launch an entry-level studio flash kit, with its curiously named FUGL-E lighting. The name is actually a reference to the somewhat uninviting look of the lights, but don't let their appearance fool you. Although the specification is basic, the lights come with a range of accessories that will allow first-time studio photographers to learn the rules of studio lighting.

FEATURES

Elemental's FUGL-E Studio Kit 2 is built around two FUGL-E 200Ws studio lights, which are supported by a pair of lightweight stands. Oddly, there are no reflector dishes for these lights, but a 20x28in softbox and a 33in umbrella diffuser are included.

Also in the kit is a radio transmitter and receiver enabling the flash heads to be fired wirelessly, although two sync cables are included for those who prefer the wired method. In addition, the flash heads have slave cells built in so they can be triggered by another flash unit.

The final piece of the kit is an 80cm 5-in-1 reflector, and its white, gold, silver, black and semi-transparent surfaces can be used to soften shadows, stop reflections or diffuse light. With so much equipment included, Elemental has made the sensible decision to package the kit in a shoulder bag, making it easy to transport. Sadly, the bag lacks feet to keep it clear of the ground, although the bottom is firmly padded.

BUILD AND HANDLING

The FUGL-E lights are made from plastic and are very basic in design, but given the cost of the kit they have a reasonable range of features. To help visualise the final image, the



lights have 75W modelling lamps and they 'beep' to indicate that the flash capacitor has recharged. Both features can be turned on or off via switches on the rear of the head. There are also switches to turn the slave cell unit on and off, to fire a test flash, as well as the main power switch for the lights.

A dimmer switch controls the power output of the flash, with the brightness ranging from full power to 1/16 in 39 steps, and the modelling light is proportionally linked to this so the effects are visible.

Assembling the kit is straightforward. However, as with most cheaper studio flash kits, it took a little effort to get the final two softbox support rods into position.

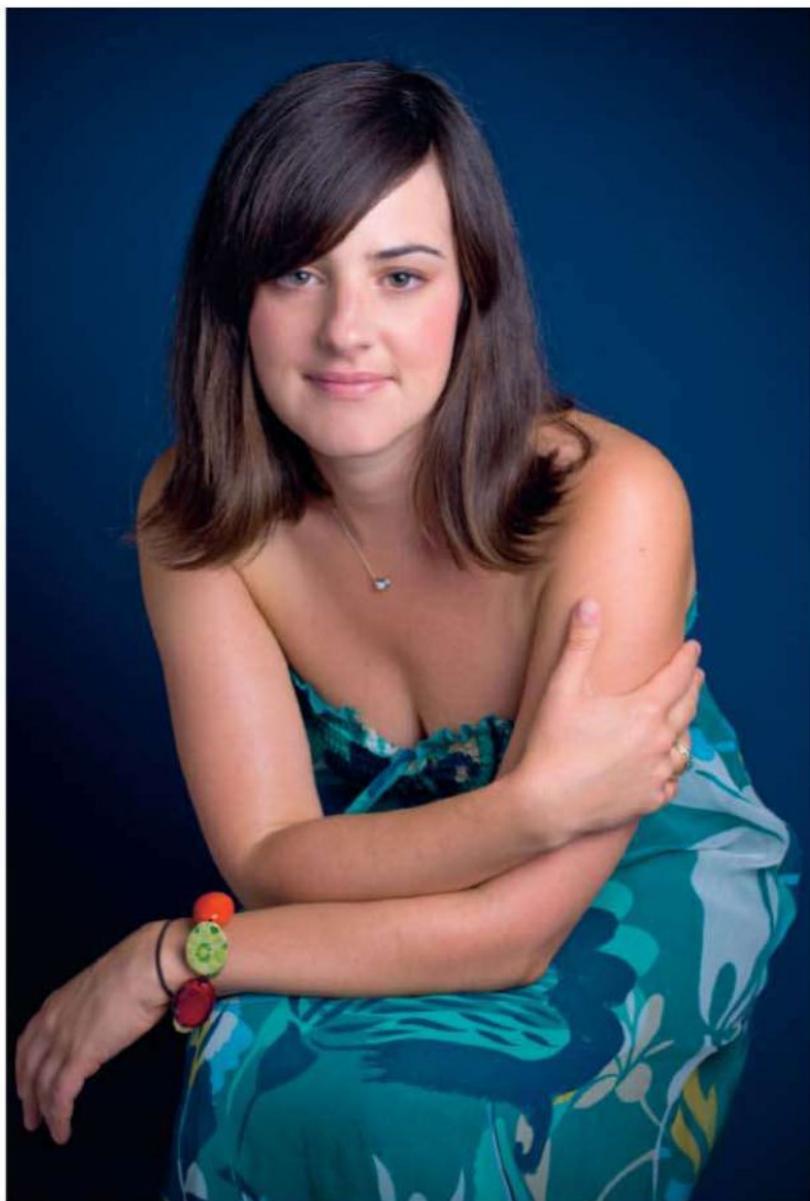
The wireless radio trigger attaches to a camera's hotshoe or PC socket, with the receiver plugging into the socket on the

rear of the flash head. Although the wireless transmitter and receiver are made of plastic and are generic in design, they worked well, enabling me to stand some way from the flash heads when shooting.

PERFORMANCE

Despite the relatively low power of the flash heads, I found they are more than powerful enough for head shots and mid-length portraits. Although it is possible to use the lights for full-length portraits, or even group shots, the lack of power and relatively small size of the softbox mean there is a drop off in light at the edges of the frame. Shooting through the umbrella diffuser is a little better in these situations, but it offers less directional control.

My biggest problem with the kit is the



absence of reflector dishes. While I was able to take a flattering single-light portrait using the softbox with the reflector placed on the opposite side of the subject to bounce the light back and fill in the shadows, some of the shots could have used a hair light. This technique uses a directional light placed above and behind the subject, pointing at the subject's head to separate the hair from the background. With no reflector dishes this was impossible, as the bare bulb simply threw light everywhere and the umbrella lit far too wide an area for this task.

Light modifiers are available for the FUGL-E lights, most notably a 95mm snoot (£15) and a set of barn doors that include a grid and lighting gels (£25). I suggest that anyone thinking of purchasing the kit also factors in the cost of the barn doors as they will help significantly with controlling the direction of the light from the flash heads. The snoot and barn doors are included with the FUGL-E Studio Kit 3, which comes with a third flash head and costs £329.

For more information and to buy visit www.studio-flash.com. Tel: 0845 643 6443

The lighting stands were another slight concern. On the positive side they are lightweight and easy to transport, but when using the softbox the stands become a little unsteady when fully extended. I recommend that the stands aren't fully extended when the softbox is being used, unless it is absolutely necessary. For added stability use a sandbag or heavy coat on the bottom of the stand. Also, the lighting stands are not air cushioned, so be careful when lowering the sections of the stand as a sudden drop could damage the bulbs.

On a more positive note, I was happy with the final images I shot using the lights. The colour temperature of the lights corresponded with the flash white balance setting on the camera I used and the softbox did a good job of diffusing the light. Being able to shoot wirelessly using the radio triggers was an added bonus and it afforded some freedom to roam around and find alternative angles without becoming tangled up in a flash sync cord. **AP**

Specification

Price	£229
Power output	200Ws full power down to 1/16
Modelling lamp	75W (proportionally adjustable with flash output)
Colour temperature	5,600K
Recycling time	0.5-1.8secs
Sync voltage	<5V
Radio receiver	Yes, 16-channel
Built-in slave	Yes
Included kit	2x FUGL-E 200Ws studio strobes, 2x sync cords, 2x lighting stands, 1x 16-channel radio trigger and receiver, 1x 20x28in softbox, 1x 33in diffuser, 1x 5-in-1 80cm reflector, studio kit bag



Verdict

EXPENSIVE lights and equipment aren't a necessity when it comes to taking great photographs, as good lighting, exposure and technique are far more important. And despite the simplicity of the FUGL-E kit, I was able to take some good portrait images. Although I'm happy with the photos, I am also frustrated by the lack of reflector dishes, which would provide more lighting options and allow for a little more creativity. That said, the compromise of not including them and opting for non-air-cushioned lighting stands has kept the cost of the kit to a minimum.

For photographers on a tight budget, the FUGL-E Studio Kit 2 could be ideal, but those who already have some idea of basic lighting would be better off considering the FUGL-E Studio Kit 3, which includes a snoot and barn doors.



Ask AP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries

SECOND-HAND BARGAIN

Q I have a Canon EOS 40D that is in fantastic condition, and I am now tempted to buy a second-hand Canon EOS-1D Mark IIN. I've seen these cameras for sale at prices ranging from £650-£900, which seems quite good considering this was a £3,000-plus camera in its day. Do you think I should sell my EOS 40D to fund the purchase? I'm thinking of doing some photography semi-professionally, so the EOS-1D Mark IIN will give me an advantage. **Pat McGuigan**

A The Canon EOS-1D Mark IIN was a great camera in its day and it still is. You'll find it in many professional sports photographers' bags. Whether or not it's the right camera for you depends on what kind of professional photography you intend to pursue. The EOS-1D Mark IIN is not a full-frame camera, but it does shoot very quickly and focuses with tremendous accuracy (better than the Mark III camera that followed it, actually). It also delivers very good image quality.

I'd advise you not to sell your EOS 40D to fund the purchase if you can possibly avoid it because you might appreciate having a second body, especially if it's in really good condition. And talking of condition, make sure you have a really good look at the EOS-1D Mark IIN

before you part with your cash. Many examples will have had extensive professional use. It's hard to tell how many shutter actuations a camera has without returning it to Canon for a service, but a good visual inspection for accidental damage and scrutinising image files at 100% should bring to light any possible problems. A camera dealer will usually offer you a six-month guarantee, too, which is something you won't get from eBay. **Ian Farrell**

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Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply send your questions to: apanswers@ipcmmedia.com or by post to: **Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**

APS-C BRIDGE CAMERAS

Q Why haven't any camera manufacturers considered using an APS-C-size sensor in bridge cameras? Fujifilm, for instance, has produced its EXR technology, which, if combined with an APS-C-size sensor, might provide serious competition for DSLRs. **V Edwards**

A One of the attractive features of bridge cameras is their huge zoom range. The equivalent of 28-400mm is not unusual. In terms of lens design, this is only possible because such a zoom only has to produce a small image circle to match the small sensor in the camera. If the sensor were bigger the lens would also have to be bigger, and would not only be large and heavy but also expensive.

Some large-sensor bridge cameras have been tried. Sony's DSC-R1 (discontinued in 2006) had an APS-C-size sensor. But even sticking with a relatively modest 24-120mm (equivalent) zoom, the camera was larger than some current DSLRs.

A Fujifilm spokesman told me that EXR technology was originally developed to get around the problem of poor performance at the telephoto end of zoom lenses, where apertures are small and light transmission is less. The improved low-light performance of such sensors fixes this issue.

The new micro-system cameras from the likes of Olympus, Panasonic and Samsung are smaller than ordinary DSLRs because they lack a mirror box, but their large sensor size is why we see smaller zoom ratios than on a bridge camera. **Ian Farrell**

FROM THE AP FORUM

Copyright ownership

Slartibartfast asks I'm trying to gain some experience of model photography, so I'm doing some time-for-prints work. The models sign a release form, but I've just noticed that one model has put some of my shots on a website. She has also edited the images, and while she hasn't done a bad job I'm annoyed because she didn't ask me. The shots now have blown highlights and very little detail. It's put me off doing any more work with models. What do you think I should do?

PhilW replies My first action would be to drop her a line and say, 'Oi! You can't edit my pics. Get them off the website!' If she ignores you, talk to the website host and ask for the images to be removed. Regarding your use of model-release forms, I never bother with these for personal portfolio work. The only time you'll need them is for publication or stock sites, neither of which I am involved with.

Ian Farrell replies Don't confuse the legal contents of a model-release form with your automatic right to retain copyright over your photography. Unless you state otherwise, copyright of your pictures always rests with you, meaning nobody else can alter or use them without your express permission, model release or no model release. A polite but firm email is probably called for.

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

USING IMAGE STABILISATION

Q When a lens has some form of image stabilisation that can be turned on and off, is there a shutter speed limit when it is not an advantage to use this facility? Alternatively, is it best to keep it turned on whatever the shutter speed? **Keith Tyrrell**

A A good rule of thumb that has served photographers well for decades regarding camera shake is not to let your shutter speed drop below the reciprocal of the 35mm-equivalent focal length of the lens you are using. Image stabilisation technology lets you go 2, 3 and sometimes even 4 stops slower than this. In reality, everyone has their own camera-shake limit that depends on the



steadiness of their hands, but this is a good starting point.

It follows, then, that having IS (Image Stabilization), VR (Vibration Reduction) or OS (Optical Stabilizer) engaged at shutter speeds faster than this camera-shake limit is not going to be of any assistance, although it won't do any harm to your photography. The only disadvantage of leaving it switched on permanently is that your camera's battery will be drained more quickly. **Ian Farrell**

OLD LENSES WITH A DSLR

Q I have a Pentax 35mm film SLR from the 1980s with 28mm, 50mm and 80-200mm lenses, all non-autofocus. After using a digital compact camera for a while, I would like to start taking my digital photography to the next level and am considering buying a digital SLR. The only problem is that I don't have much money. Would it be possible to reuse my old Pentax lenses on a more recent DSLR body? **Patrick Wolff**

A Yes, Patrick, it is possible. When it comes to retaining compatibility with brand lenses, Pentax is one of the better manufacturers. A modern Pentax DSLR, like the K-x, will accept your old lenses and give you most of the camera's functionality. You won't be able to use matrix metering, but everything else will be fine.

My only word of warning concerns the focal-length multiplication factor that applies to all lenses attached to such bodies. The sensor in a Pentax DSLR is smaller than 35mm film, so your lenses will all give an angle of view equivalent to a lens of 1.5x the focal length. For instance, your 28mm optic will act like a 42mm lens, and your 50mm optic will offer the same angle of view as a 75mm lens. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it's worth pointing out that you would be deficient at the wideangle end of the focal length scale. For this reason, kit zoom lenses usually have a focal length of about 18-55mm, which works out to 27-82.5mm in film photography terms.

It's also worth noting that body-only prices often don't represent good value for money at this cheaper end of the scale. Selecting a retailer at random, a Pentax K-m body at Park Cameras (www.parkcameras.co.uk) costs £389, while a kit with an 18-55mm lens costs only £399. **Ian Farrell**

f/FAQ

Shooting your first wedding

All amateur photographers are asked to shoot a friend's wedding at some point. The friend may be trying to save money or just like your style of photographs, but regardless of their motives the first time you cover a wedding is a nerve-wracking experience. Here are a few things you can do to make life less stressful.

- In advance: Meet with the bride and groom and ask what kind of photography they want. Then be prepared for them to change their minds. Visit the venue at the same time of day as the service will take place and come up with a list of potential picture ideas. This will help take some of the pressure off on the big day. Look for a good spot to do group portraits if these are required.
- Think about kit: A standard zoom and a telezoom are the perfect lenses with which to shoot a wedding, and the wider the aperture the better. If you have a second DSLR body, then so much the better as you'll be able to swap lenses much more quickly. If you think you are lacking in kit, consider hiring it. Retailers like Calumet offer good-value deals for weekend rental, although never use unfamiliar equipment on the big day without testing it first. The day before the wedding, check all your kit and charge every battery you have.
- On the day: Arrive early and check the location to make sure nothing has changed. Introduce yourself to the registrar or vicar and ask what you are allowed to photograph during the service. Assure them you won't be obtrusive (turn that AF confirmation beep off), and respect any limits they give you. Keep taking pictures all the time. Even when you are not shooting a portrait, you can be shooting candid pictures of the couple and their family and friends. And don't forget the small details, such as table decorations, rings, dress details and so on.
- Afterwards: Before you do anything with the image files, back them up – twice. Then sit down and enjoy the editing process, hopefully relishing in the good job you've made of shooting your first wedding.

Ian Farrell

In next week's AP

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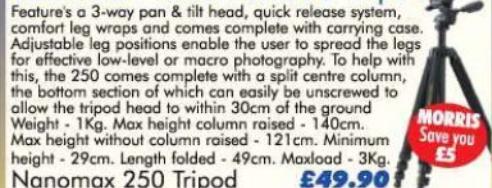
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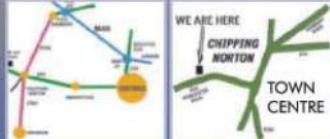
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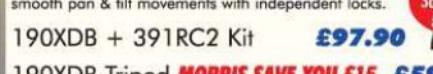
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Hasselblad H4D-40

Falling prices mean it might not be too long before medium-format photography is back on the agenda for enthusiasts, but what can we expect from a digital medium-format camera?

THANKS to its superior image quality, medium-format photography has traditionally been popular among serious enthusiasts, but the increasing dominance of digital media has resulted in many medium-format cameras now lying idle. Of course, this is great news for the committed film user because it means second-hand medium-format kit has never been so affordable, but the financial and creative freedom of digital photography is just too much to give up for many photographers.

Although the current cost of digital medium-format cameras puts them out of reach of most enthusiast photographers, it's clear that the format has a future and while more models are being introduced,

prices have tumbled over the past few years. With this in mind, Damien Demolder, Angela Nicholson and Richard Sibley set out to discover what can be expected from a current model. Hasselblad cameras have never been cheap, but they are the benchmark by which others are measured, so the company's latest model, the H4D-40, is the obvious camera to put through its paces. This isn't intended to be a full test, but each of us spent a day shooting a different type of subject with the camera, to see how it handles and performs. We were all keen to find out if Hasselblad's claim that the H4D-40 is as easy to use as a 35mm SLR really is true, and if any of us would be phoning the bank manager to ask for a loan.

Features

FOR MANY photographers the most important fact about the H4D-40 is its asking price, so let's get it out of the way first. A kit with an 80mm lens can be bought for around £13,000. It is a lot of money, but much less than a digital medium-format setup would have cost a few years ago.

The H4D-40's modular construction means that, while it is a digital SLR camera, the viewfinder, sensor (or back) and lens can be removed and swapped for alternatives. It also makes the camera more future-proof as the back can be upgraded. In fact, Hasselblad offers two other cameras in the H4D line, among which the only difference in specification is the back. While the H4D-40 has a 40MP sensor, the H4D-50 and H4D-60 have 50MP and 60MP devices respectively.

The Kodak-manufactured sensor in the H4D-40 measures 33.1x44.2mm and has 7303x5478 pixels. Only raw file output is possible (Hasselblad 3FR format) and lossless compression sees the 16-bit files weigh in at around 50MB. Tethered shooting is possible via a FireWire 800 (or 800 to 400) cable, but as the camera back contains a processing engine and UDMA-compatible CF card slot, the photographer can shoot without connecting the camera to a computer. However, like many medium-format models, the H4D-40 isn't designed for quick-fire photography: each capture takes 1.1secs. Low-light shooting is also restricted, as the camera has a maximum sensitivity setting of ISO 1600.

The H4D-40 has one cross-type AF point, and features Hasselblad's innovative True Focus system. This uses level sensors to detect the angle the camera is held at and automatically adjusts the focus to compensate for changes in subject distance when focusing and recomposing.

The 3in LCD screen is not Live View-enabled so images may only be reviewed and not composed on it. It also has quite low resolution with just 230,400 pixels.

The HVD 90x eye-level viewfinder with -5 to +3.5 dioptre adjustment is supplied, but a surprise inclusion, perhaps, is an integral flash (GN 12m @ ISO 100) in addition to the hotshoe.

While it may not have all the technology of a modern APS-C-format DSLR, the H4D-40 has all the modern essentials covered with autofocus, metering and automatic, semi-automatic and manual exposure modes.

Hasselblad H system

THE HASSELBLAD H4D-40 is part of the Hasselblad modular H series of medium-format cameras. Like other digital medium-format cameras, there are two main parts: the camera, in this case with a battery forming the grip, a viewfinder and lens; and the digital back that contains the sensor.

The digital backs are interchangeable, but with the cameras costing upwards of £12,000 most photographers are likely to have only one.

There are currently 11 Hasselblad H-series lenses available, including the HCD 35-90mm f/4-5.6 and HC Macro 120mm f/4 lenses we used with the H4D-40. Lenses from the classic Hasselblad V system are also compatible with H-system lenses via an adapter.

One of the more interesting accessories in the H system is the HTS 1.5x tilt-and-shift lens adapter. This works with five of the existing H-series lenses,

giving them tilt-and-shift capabilities while retaining infinity focus. However, it costs around £3,500, so it is only likely to be of interest to professional users.

There are three viewfinders available in the H system. The HVD 90x and HV 90x are 90° reflex viewfinders with slightly different magnifications. These viewfinders make the H-series cameras handle a lot more like a conventional DSLR. A waist-level finder is also available in the form of the HVM. Like most medium-format waist-level finders, this features a magnified hood to make precise focusing easier.

A medium-format roll-film back is also available in the form of the HM 16-32 and even the HM 100, which is compatible with Polaroid 100-type instant film. It may seem odd to produce these products on such an advanced digital camera, but specialist film is still used in some advanced medical and scientific applications.



Landscape

In the pre-dawn landscape **Damien Demolder** was glad he had spent some time familiarising himself with the H4D-40's control layout

MY TASK for this feature was to use the Hasselblad H4D-40 to shoot landscapes. Choosing to shoot just before sunrise and into the morning, I set myself up with the tripod kit, some ND grads and a polariser as one would normally. The first challenge, though, was the size of the front element of the lenses we were using. With a thread diameter of 95mm for the 35-90mm f/4-5.6 zoom lens and 67mm for the 120mm f/4 macro optic, I was going to have to dig out my largest accessories. The zoom lens barrel is wider than anything else I use, including my plate and 5x4in kit, while most of my medium-format lenses happily share filters with the lenses for my 35mm and DSLR kits.

Packed into a Billingham shoulder bag, the body plus two lenses kit is heavy enough but not much worse than I would normally carry, although all the padding and compartments had to come out so the

Medium-format options

DIGITAL medium-format capture began with the introduction of sensor-housing backs that were compatible with several existing medium-format camera systems. There are backs with 22-60 million pixels from companies such as Hasselblad, Leaf and Phase One that are designed to be used with modern, updated medium-format cameras such as the Mamiya RZ67 Pro IID, Mamiya 645 AFD and Hasselblad V-series models available today. Using a back isn't a cheap option as they generally start at around £7,000.



While these backs were originally intended to allow photographers to turn their expensive (and much-loved) cameras into digital models, some manufacturers have turned their attention towards producing complete digital systems designed from the ground up. In addition to the H4D range from Hasselblad, there are models available from Leica (S2), Mamiya (RZ33), Phase One (645DF) and (hopefully soon in the UK) Pentax (645D). While none of these cameras is exactly cheap, they generally cost less than buying a camera with a separate digital back.



body would fit with a lens attached.

I used a standard mid-weight Benbo tripod with the Manfrotto 410 geared head, and found both coped well with the load.

HANDLING

I had spent some time familiarising myself with the menu system and function locations of the camera and back so I would be ready to shoot fluidly in the field. I am glad I did, as the 'pushing porridge' process of moving between features would have been too frustrating to learn on the job. Being used to instant reactions, and buttons and dials with a positive response, I stepped back at least eight years to buttons that require domination to activate and a menu system that hides its features. It is an amazingly old-fashioned and slow system.

In the dark of the pre-dawn the viewfinder of the H4D-40 is bright enough that you can easily check the focus point found by the AF system, and then adjust it if needed. I found that the camera focuses surprisingly easily on distant subjects and, with their bright wide apertures, the lenses I used made clear what would and wouldn't appear sharp. The depth of field button takes time to find, but it provides what it should. Neutral density graduated filters are so much easier to use through a large finder.

The screen on the rear of the camera is good enough to let you know you have recorded an image, but it falls some way short of indicating whether the exposure is anywhere near correct, whether you have chosen a suitable colour temperature and

whether your focus is accurate. I ran the whole day with the histogram display as reassuring company.

Although, theoretically, the magic of digital imaging means there is no restriction on the number of pictures one can record in a session, CompactFlash cards only hold so much. With file sizes of about 50MB, for now at least we might be almost as restricted as we were with 120 film.

IMAGE QUALITY

The handling of the camera, and particularly the back, may not be ideal, but the quality of images produced is first rate. Shooting between ISO 100 and 800, I found noise is simply not an issue. The lenses and back combine to collect the tiniest detail in the most distant subject, and my landscapes contain every leaf on the trees and every blade of grass. My usual rule is that you need 300 pixels for every inch of paper you want to print on. With a good camera you can get away with halving that figure, to create a print twice the length, if you first interpolate the file to fill the gaps between the original pixels. Viewing files from the H4D-40 on-screen at 100%, the images look clean and detailed, as though they can be printed at that size. Only when blown up to 200% does the detail become confused and the pixel elements visible. I guess this is what you pay for – the detail and the enlargement potential that good-quality pixels offer.

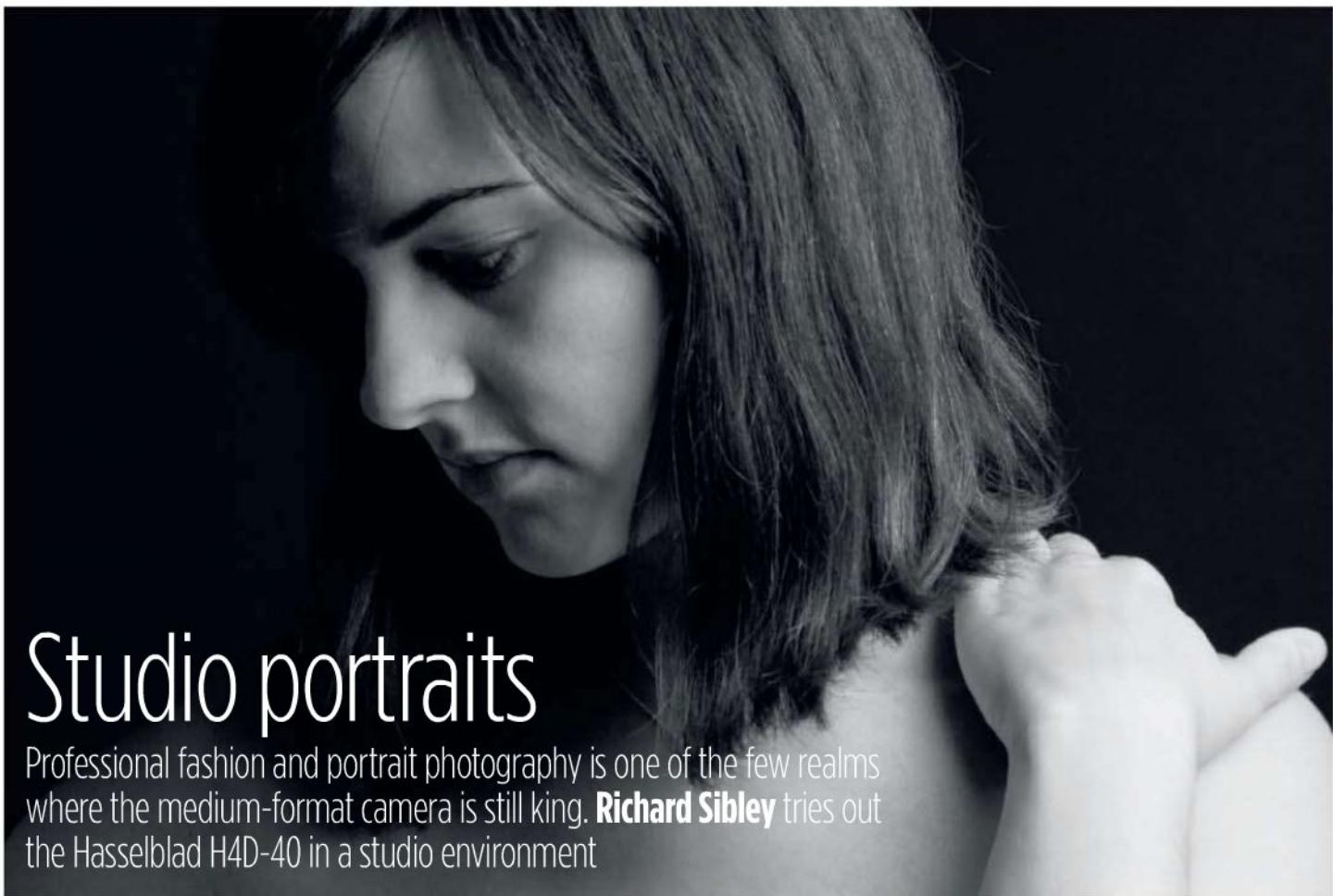
All images are saved as raw files, and I used the supplied Phocus software to work

on the images and then convert them to a more usable format. Although the software is less convenient to use than the latest version of Adobe Camera Raw, it does have the benefit of customised optical corrections for the lens used, and the focus point and focal length it was used at. In fact, the package is efficient enough, and provides an excellent collection of adjustment possibilities. The dynamic range achievable gives contrast control right back to the photographer and, although ND grads will still be needed, they will be less necessary than you might be used to.

CONCLUSION

While it is definitely true to say that the pictures produced by the Hasselblad H4D-40 are excellent, it is a little more difficult to say the same of the camera. There are elements that are nice to use, and the metering, colour and viewfinder are all very good. I do find it hard to get over the handling issues, though, and think the Hasselblad needs to step forward a little to make the menus more usable and the screen of more use. Pentax is streets ahead in this area with its 645D.

We don't usually comment on value for money, but when so much money is involved it is hard to ignore. The kit I was using would cost £22,424.89, which perhaps is less money for a business tool than it is for a hobby camera. The Hasselblad H4D is not any more expensive than its competition, but for the money I really would expect a better handling experience.



Studio portraits

Professional fashion and portrait photography is one of the few realms where the medium-format camera is still king. **Richard Sibley** tries out the Hasselblad H4D-40 in a studio environment

ONE OF the main reasons for the continued popularity of medium-format cameras among professional studio photographers is the high resolution of images that are captured. For a professional photographer this is vitally important, as the client may wish to make large prints at a high resolution.

It has been a couple of years since I used a medium-format camera, a Bronica ETRS, in a studio, and one of the first things that struck me about the Hasselblad H4D-40 was its size, especially with the 35-90mm f/4-5.6 lens attached. I was a little concerned about camera shake while handholding the camera. I was also slightly concerned that my arms might not be able to keep holding the camera while shooting for a couple of hours.

My fears were largely unfounded. While the camera is more substantial than a professional DSLR such as a Nikon D3X, it is surprisingly comfortable to handhold. I needn't have worried about camera shake, either. By turning off the lights for the studio and selecting a shutter speed of 1/250sec, the dim ambient light wasn't captured by the sensor, leaving the quick burst of the studio flash lights as the sole source of illumination.

HANDLING

It took some time to get used to a few of the H4D-40's controls, as they are scattered around the side as well as the rear of the camera body. One button that is a little

awkward is the True Focus AF button. Its peculiar position requires you to stretch the thumb of your right hand. It would be better placed nearer to the thumb's natural resting place on the rear of the camera. Thankfully, nearly all the exposure-setting buttons are positioned around the H4D-40's LCD top-plate.

When focusing on the subject's eye, the extremely shallow depth of field sometimes makes it difficult to tell whether or not the True Focus AF has worked. Often the pupil would be perfectly in focus, and at other times the eyelashes would be sharper.

What is staggering is the sheer level of detail that is captured. Again, this is most noticeable in the subject's eyes. With a 40-million-pixel image, the level of detail can be quite unforgiving – each eyelash and hair is clearly visible, making it a retoucher's dream, or worst nightmare depending on how you wish to look at the images.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND LIGHTROOM

Before importing the images into Lightroom 3, I used three 'traffic-light' buttons on the camera back to tag each image. Once I had done this I was able to delete all the 'red', rejected images from the card, leaving only the green and amber images to be imported into Lightroom. Rejecting the images that weren't needed at this stage helped to speed up the import process.

With such large file sizes I set Lightroom

The H4D-40 is capable of capturing a great amount of detail, which is further emphasised by the very shallow depth of field that can be created

to create its own full-size preview files when importing the images, which saved time when browsing and cataloguing the images. Also impressive was Lightroom's default sharpening, which I tweaked to reveal an amazing amount of detail.

CONCLUSION

The H4D-40 is quite a staggering camera and yes, I do want one – I think most portrait photographers would. However, the expense does not make it a viable option for anyone except advertising photographers at the very top of their game. For the rest of us mere mortals there are now plenty of other full-frame, high-resolution DSLRs that will happily fulfil our needs.



Still life

Angela Nicholson spent a day shooting still life and macro subjects with the H4D-40, and found herself wishing it was Live View-enabled

I OPTED to shoot still-life and macro subjects, which meant that the camera would be tripod-mounted throughout. This was a bonus for me: while the H4D-40's battery creates a comfortable, ergonomically shaped grip, I find that with the 120mm f/4 macro lens mounted, the camera is too heavy to hold steadily to my eye for more than a few seconds at a time.

In the relatively low light of my naturally lit dining room, the H4D-40's AF system struggled to focus consistently on the close-to-dark cherries I selected to shoot. Fortunately, the HVD 90x viewfinder that is supplied in the kit provides a reasonably clear view of the subject.

As I was shooting at about waist-height, the optional waist-level finder might have been easier on my neck – but of course it is less than ideal with portrait-format images. There were also a few occasions when I found I needed a torch to provide a little extra illumination and I had to adjust the lens slightly in and out of focus to gradually find the sharpest point. It wasn't long before I was longing for Live View technology; the magnified view of the subject would enable me to focus much quicker and more confidently.

MIRROR-SLAP

A quick look at my first few images confirmed my suspicions that the hefty clack of the mirror was introducing some shake and that mirror lock-up was required. Although I had located the appropriate button for this feature, I had to check the manual to fathom out exactly how to use it. It turned out to be quite versatile and I set the camera to lift the mirror two seconds after I pressed the shutter release, then pause for a further two seconds before firing the shutter. The result was blur-free images. My only frustration was that it doesn't appear to be possible to set the camera to remain in this mode and the Enter (ISO/WB) and Save (AF) buttons need to be pressed between each exposure.

IMAGE TRANSFER

Adobe doesn't list the H4D-40 as being compatible with Camera Raw 5.7, but I found I was able to open and adjust the 3FR-format images successfully by right-clicking and selecting Open in Camera Raw.

Having a CF card on board means I was free to shoot without computer connection, but the 50MB files soon mount up so transferring the images to a computer can take a while. If you only have a USB 2.0 card reader, it's worth connecting the camera via the supplied FireWire cable to speed up the process of downloading images.

Shooting with the camera tethered to a computer via the FireWire 800 cable and using the supplied Phocus software means the images are transferred one at a time as they are shot, which could be preferable when shooting indoors. This method also brings the advantage of allowing each image to be examined in detail on a large computer monitor, as the 3in, 230,400-pixel LCD screen doesn't display as much detail as



Because of the large sensor, depth of field is very restricted with the 120mm f/4 macro lens at f/11 (below) and f/16 (above)



some smaller format DSLR monitors. The software can also be used to control the camera, even setting the white balance by using the sample tool to correct an otherwise neutral area.

I shot with the camera untethered for most of the time I had it, and it took me a while to work out how to set a custom white balance because the camera's two LCD screens display slightly different menus for some features. Although the white balance button is next to the grip-based LCD, it is impossible to set a custom white balance value via this menu display. I had already used Adobe Camera Raw 5.7 to assess the appropriate colour temperature to set the manual white balance value to, when I discovered a method of setting a custom value via the controls shown on larger LCD screen.

CONCLUSION

Like many photographers, when I use a film medium-format camera I tend to shoot in a slower, more considered way. To a large extent this is because of the cost of the film and processing and the limited number of shots that fit on each roll, but the size of the camera and the format have an impact as well. During the course of my time with the H4D-40 I shot many more images than I ever have with a film medium-format camera in a single day. Using a camera that produces 50MB images naturally slows things down a little, but I can see that in the future the jump between a smaller-format digital camera and medium-format model could be made as easy as swapping between an APS-C camera and a full-frame DSLR. As the H4D-40 stands, I find controlling it via the Phocus software more straightforward than using its own button and dial controls. **AP**

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CANON EF 100MM F/2 USM £560



CARL ZEISS MAKRO-PLANAR T* 100MM F/2
€1,649 (around £1,360)



Fast 100mm telephoto lenses

Geoffrey Crawley compares two similarly specified telephoto lenses, with one being a general-purpose optic and the other a specialist design

BOTH THE Canon and Carl Zeiss lenses on test here have the same focal length and wide aperture, but could hardly be more different in design and intention. When reviewing the 85mm f/1.4 lenses in AP 26 June, I made the point that an 85mm focal length on 135 and full-frame format offers a good general-purpose short telephoto lens. It does not isolate the main subject too much from its background, and the compression of planes, which gives an uncomfortable perspective effect with long lenses, is minimal. So what is the purpose of a 100mm

focal length that is likely to begin to show these effects? Well, it has an important role in portraiture for 'big head' shots, and the wide aperture gives available light capability and depth of field control, enabling grab shots of individuals without flash.

A quick check on current lens listings shows there are just as many 100mm or 105mm monofocal lenses as there are 85mm models. Nikon has always favoured the 105mm focal length, and some independents have followed suit. However, these types of optics have another special

application for which they are favoured by experts – close-up photography. The focal length is long enough to push the camera back from the subject, giving sufficient space between them for freedom in lighting, flash setups or bits and bobs, such as Plasticine and Blu-Tack. Often such a standoff may be essential to allow lighting to be optimally set up. These applications, which are often technical, are why a number of 100-105mm lenses on the market are 'macro' focusing. Among them is the Carl Zeiss Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2 lens on test here. Alongside it is the Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM optic, which is a general-purpose design. Used on the APS-C-format, a 100mm focal length image field is cropped roughly to that of a 150mm lens.

Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM

Although launched back in 1991, this is a fine workhorse of a lens that should fulfil every application



THE CANON EF 100mm f/2 USM is a conventional, no-frills unit focusing to a normal 0.9m (3ft). Launched in 1991, it arrived just before lens design became affected by the realisation of the special requirements necessary for digital cameras, namely, suppression of stray light in the camera's dark chamber, minimising of vignetting and reduction of lateral colour aberration. All these factors are also significant for achieving good results on film, so any improvement in a design for digital SLR use will also benefit users of film cameras. Their deleterious effect is merely greater in digital imaging. However, not everyone is happy with current lens fashion of aiming for images with greater impact, and the more traditional smoother 'pictorial' effect of a classic lens still has its place. Actually, this special quality could be the product of the less rigorous corrections of those days. Today, the performance of lenses of similar specification has evened up and we do not very often hear a photographer treating a particular lens like a precious crown jewel for what he/she believes it uniquely contributes to their work.

The lens has the appearance of an enlarged 50mm standard monofocal optic for the 135 and full-frame format. It has the rather dull semi-gloss finish that is typical of Canon lenses of its era. A collar of muted gold flecks up front reminds us that this lens has Canon's ultrasonic motor (USM) to drive the automatic focusing. The use of manual focus seems expected by the 15mm breadth and prominence of the control ring. It also has the turn resistance of a classic manual lens. Behind it the distance scale sits under its protective window. The AF/M slider switch is in the usual place for a Canon lens, at ten o'clock on the left of the barrel. Manual fine-tuning when in AF mode is allowed.

The weight at 460g is noticeable, but not excessive. It ensures that the lens sits

comfortably on the lighter Canon film and digital cameras. At 75mm in overall diameter, the manual focus ring is easily gripped by smaller hands. The compact length of 73.5mm maintains the balance when the lens is mounted on the camera. It might be expected to have a bayonet-fitting hood, but it takes a clip-on one and a 58mm screw-in filter.

OPTICALLY

The construction of the Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM uses eight elements in six groups. There are no special glasses or aspheric elements used; after all, a 100mm monofocal lens has none of the problems of a zoom optic. It sits in that region, roughly 70–200mm, where monofocal lenses for 135 format can be highly corrected. This is because the image field of a lens in this range has only the 43mm diagonal of full frame to cover. The designer therefore has freedom to ignore the other 57mm of field diagonal and concentrate on central corrections.

The configuration is fairly standard. The rear group extends the focal length of the front ones and evens out illumination towards the frame corners. The wide aperture of f/2 enhances the depth of field control that a 100mm optic already has, as Canon points out. The lens is fully up to date in that focusing is internal, by movement of group five, which sits immediately behind the iris diaphragm. As a result, the front element does not rotate, which makes using graduated or polarising filters easier.

PERFORMANCE

This is a fine workhorse of a lens that should fulfil every application – general or technical – except close focusing. The quality is assisted by a focal length that allows the lens to be very highly corrected. In practical terms, good sharpness and definition

Isolating a subject at 100mm is ideal with an f/2 lens

cover the frame at full aperture (f/2). Detail tightens up with improved definition at f/2.8 and the optimum is reached at f/4. However, f/2 can be used without hesitation in poor light conditions and f/2.8 would satisfy most demands except the most critical for detail. Contrast is medium-high.

At the maximum aperture of f/2 vignetting is apparent, but not unsatisfactory, and by f/2.8 it is gone, leaving plenty of scope for images with shallow depth of field without corner shading. Lateral colour aberration is closely controlled across the frame, which is a digital-imaging requirement to prevent colour fringing. I found that TV aerials shot against a bright sky (usually a testing target) showed no signs of colour fringing.

As we might expect distortion is low, although there is a hint of barrelling, but this should present no problem except in the most critical applications.

At 270ms from infinity to closest, it is one of the fastest AF drives I have tested. It gave a fairly quiet 37dB over 35dB background motor noise, making this lens a good choice for candid shots of moving subjects.

In short, the Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM of 1991 remains fully up to speed. It will especially please those who do not like detail that is too wiry. Like many designs of the film/digital changeover era, it has a classic appeal. It also offers dual-media users an excellent tool for both film and digital photography. A version in the modern, more attractive Canon livery would smarten it up for the new century.

'The Canon EF 100mm f/2 USM has a classic appeal. It also offers dual-media users an excellent tool for both film and digital photography'

Twice as bright as f/2.8, an f/2 lens is ideal for low-light scenes



Carl Zeiss Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2

Costing almost three times as much as the Canon, the Carl Zeiss model is a lens for the dedicated amateur

WHILE the Carl Zeiss Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2 can be used as a studio and portrait lens, it is intended for technical and scientific applications. It focuses to 0.24m, giving a repro scale of 2:1 (half life-size). It maintains electronic links to the camera body with the exception of automatic focusing, which makes it a manual-focus lens. There is no point in considering a purchase unless the close-up facility is to be a main function.

The mounts now available for this lens are ZE (Canon EOS), ZF and ZF.2 (Nikon F and F with CPU) and ZK (Pentax).

GENERAL FEATURES

The compact size and weight of the Canon lens reflect its general-purpose intention. With the Carl Zeiss optic we are in a different ball park. Its 'Makro' range means a larger and bulkier design, although its 680g weight is not excessive. Even on a light camera its compact dimensions at the normal-to-mid-range focus distance give a balanced handheld grip. Set to infinity, it extends 95mm from the body flange, extending to 142mm at closest focus. The focus range is covered by a single full turn of the grip. Turn resistance of the helical is perfectly smooth but strong. The screw-in filter fitting is 67mm and the tube-like lens hood attaches via a three-tab bayonet, extending the lens length to 195mm from body flange.

The index carries depth of field marks for f/11 and f/22 and, on careful inspection, one for focus on infrared film. The weight distribution is surprisingly comfortable when

Although there is slight vignetting at f/2, the level of detail is particularly impressive



handheld, but with close-up work it feels front-heavy when the camera is mounted on a tripod by its base screw-thread. Users of lightweight tripods beware.

OPTICALLY

The basic Planar construction is one of six designs of the late 19th century by the great lens designer Paul Rudolph of Zeiss. He worked with the new optical glasses researched by Ernst Abbe and Otto Schott, which became available around 130 years ago. His Tessar-type lens has been the most imitated and manufactured for use in general-purpose cameras. Yet it is the Planar and its double Gauss derivations that have fronted – and still do – much of the top-flight amateur and professional equipment of the last century.

The nine-elements-in-eight-groups construction does not have special glasses or aspherics. A 'floating' group is used to correct the increase in spherical aberration as the lens is close-focused. The overall design is said to have evolved from Zeiss's Master Prime design, which was specially developed for Arriflex movie cameras. It is intended to improve accuracy of focus at the shallow depth of field at f/2. That feature will help visual focusing using DSLR viewfinders, which are not known for their discrimination. Manual focus fares better on the more helpful viewfinders of film SLRs. However, the availability of Live View in the digital camera will greatly enhance the practicality of the lens.

Why doesn't Zeiss produce automatic focusing versions? All the 'Z' lenses are optimised with manual focus. The configurations cannot just be converted to AF as it would be necessary to go back to the drawing board and start again. Zeiss sees no market future in such a venture at this time, entailing as it would major financial investment.

PERFORMANCE

This is a lens for those with a long-term involvement in close-up work, such as a professional or a very dedicated amateur. At nearly three times the cost of the Canon lens on test here one should expect something special, and as it is a Zeiss lens this leads to the expectation of state-of-the-art performance. In fact, it is not a recent design, but one given new life after the exit of Zeiss from the camera market. The only loss of functionality is in the lack of automatic focusing, which, in close-up work in artificial setups at least, is not often of great consequence. However, the long slow extension during focusing makes it unsuitable for grab shots, unless you can pre-focus on a particular spot.

The normal general photographic range of, say, infinity to one metre is covered in an initial brief turn. Performance over the focus space is excellent; only a fraction more vignetting at f/2 marks it out from the Canon lens, but this is gone by f/2.8. Coverage across the frame is there at f/2, although f/2.8 evens it up noticeably. Contrast is higher than with the Canon lens and the detail definition at f/4 is outstanding. Contrast/resolution checked at full extension (closest focus, 2:1, 0.24m) shows the same high-quality results. Contrast loss at f/2 is minimal, and f/16 can be used unhesitatingly. Also, vignetting, despite the long extension of the optical cell, does not increase at 2:1. Lateral colour aberration correction is impeccable. Distortion at -0.006% (barrel) is virtually non-existent. This is very important in a lens that will be used for scientific, technical and medical work. With the Zeiss lens I could find no technically significant difference in the image quality at focus steps from infinity to 2:1 and any aperture.

'This is a lens for those with a long-term involvement in close-up work, such as a professional or a very dedicated amateur'



Manual focus at f/2 with the Zeiss provides a challenge when shooting street portraits

Verdict

Amateur
Photographer
92%



CANON

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPECIFICATION	28/30									
BUILD	18/20									
HANDLING	18/20									
PERFORMANCE	28/30									

THE CANON EF 100mm f/2 USM lens is just one unit in the comprehensive range available for Canon film and digital SLRs. The Carl Zeiss Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2 optic is a highly specialised design that will only be of use to those whose work routinely takes them beyond the close-up limit of the Canon lens. And unless it does, there really is no reason to consider its acquisition – other than by those who feel satisfaction in owning the best tools irrespective of the price. The Canon lens will fulfil all the general photographic requirements of a lens of this specification. The wide aperture will confer poor light capability, removing the need for flash, and it gives great depth of field control. The Canon lens's image quality is very suited to portraiture, but you are more likely to meet up with the Zeiss optic in a lab, technical institute or medical illustration department.

The Canon lens scores entirely in

CARL ZEISS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPECIFICATION	27/30									
BUILD	19/20									
HANDLING	17/20									
PERFORMANCE	29/30									

practicality as it is easy to handle. That's quite apart from its possession of automatic focusing using the ultrasonic motordrive. In this department it is one of the fastest AF movements tested so far. In practical use, there is no contest between the two. It is in its close-focusing range only that the Canon does not compete. The spirit of Paul Rudolph, who computed the first Planar lens over a century ago, must be smiling broadly. The Zeiss lens is available in various forms and kits, and there is also an adapter that allows ZF Nikon A1-fitting lenses to be used on Canon EOS-system cameras. The Zeiss gear is expensive because it is not built to a price. I once suggested that Zeiss produce a second tier of more affordable lenses to broaden its market. There was a moment of dead silence, then came the reply, 'You mean we should make lenses less good than we know how?' Enough said!

For more information visit www.canon.co.uk or www.zeiss.co.uk

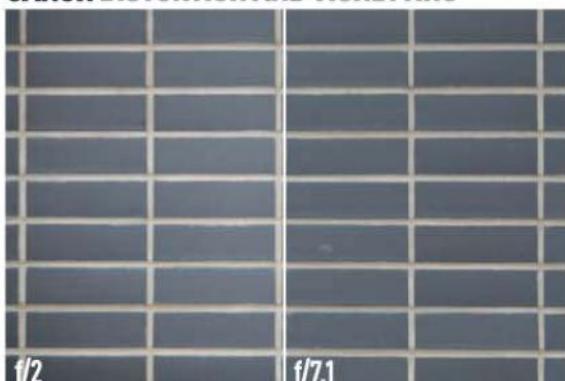
Amateur
Photographer
92%



Facts & figures

CANON	ZEISS
RRP	£560
Lens mount	Canon EF
Max aperture	f/2
Angle of view	20°
Near focus	0.90m
Diaphragm blades	8
Filter size	58mm
Weight	460g
Measured focal length	101.3mm
Dimensions	75x73.5mm
	Approximately £1,360
	Canon EF (ZE), Nikon F (ZF and ZF2), Pentax K (ZK)
	f/2
	38°
	0.24m
	9
	67mm
	680g
	99.8mm
	91x75.4mm

CANON DISTORTION AND VIGNETTING



ZEISS DISTORTION AND VIGNETTING



Understanding the graphs

SHARPNESS AND DEFINITION

The graphs shown here demonstrate the ability of the lenses on test to resolve detail. As the lines move to the right along the horizontal axis, the detail the lens is asked to record becomes finer, thus the lens becomes less successful at recording it accurately. Each sloping line on the graph represents measurements taken from a particular area of the image – the centre and the corner – with both measurements being made for images taken using the widest aperture as well as with the aperture closed by two stops. The grid places a numerical value on the success of the lens in recording these details at three line-pair-per-millimetre points: 10lp/mm, 30lp/mm and 50lp/mm. The graph for a near perfect lens would show the lines all very close together and near the top of the vertical axis. When the lines are all very close together, the performance of the lens is almost as good at the edge of the frame as it is in the middle – where lenses are at their best. If lines stay close to the top of the graph, the lens is able to clearly resolve very fine detail. All lenses have a limit to what they can resolve, and this is shown where the lines of the graph begin to slope downwards.

CHROMATIC ABERRATION

Lateral chromatic aberration induces colour fringing and loss of sharpness, so edges are rimmed with colour and are soft. These graphs show the degree of error when the ISO 12,233 slanted knife-edge test is performed at the key focal length settings. Measurements are taken from the centre of the image and from the edge, where lens performance dips. The greater the divergence of the red, green and blue lines, the greater the error and the more likely the lens is to exhibit the effects of chromatic aberration. Some divergence in the lines is to be expected, especially at the shorter focal-length settings of zoom lenses and at the edge of the image frame. It is the overall appearance that is important rather than the detail of the curves.

VIGNETTING

These diagrams indicate the vignetting characteristics of each lens at full aperture. They show the degree of difference in the illumination between the centre of the image frame and the corners of the frame. Measured in EV, figures larger than 1/3EV will be clearly visible. Deviations of 1/6EV and below will not show. The darkest areas indicate shading of about 1/2EV and the lighter areas 1/3EV, but in reality the effect is graduated.

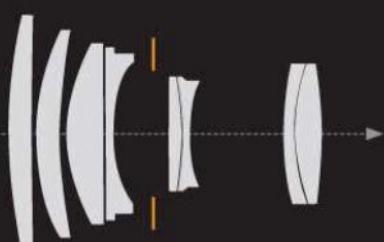
CURVILINEAR DISTORTION

These figures illustrate the degree of 'bend' in a straight line that was recorded 4mm from the top edge of the frame, with '-' indicating barrel distortion and '+' indicating pincushion distortion.

LENS CONSTRUCTION

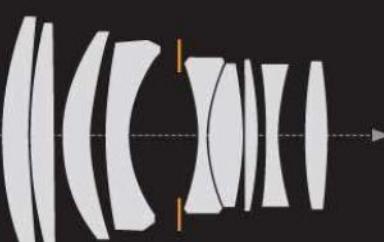
CANON

The fifth group, which is located immediately behind the diaphragm, provides the internal focusing. The whole lens moves with the Zeiss lens's focusing mechanism



ZEISS

The double-Gauss front end is similar in both lenses, but the Zeiss optic requires a more sophisticated configuration to give the close focusing



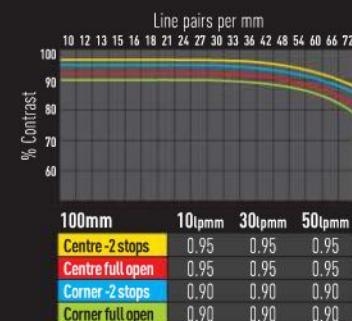
SHARPNESS/DEFINITION

Although the Canon lens is a good performer, it cannot quite match the Zeiss optic for fine detail resolution, especially in the corners of the image frame when the aperture is wide open. However, the Canon lens is a good choice for those who prefer marginally less punchy, more pictorial images

CANON



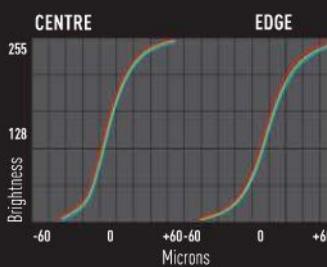
ZEISS



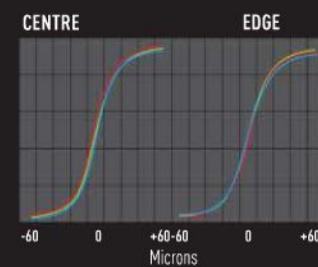
CHROMATIC ABERRATION

The close proximity of the three coloured lines indicates that chromatic aberration is controlled well at the centre of the imaging frame of both lenses. Slight divergence of the lines in edge charts, however, suggests that coloured fringing may sometimes appear along high-contrast edges near the periphery of the frame

CANON



ZEISS



VIGNETTING

CANON



ZEISS



CANON

	CANON	ZEISS
100mm	100mm	100mm
F/2	<1/3	>1/3
F/2.8	-	-
F/4	-	-

ZEISS

Corner shading is not a major issue with either lens, but it is slightly more visible in images taken using the Zeiss optic wide open. Stopping down to f/2.8 cuts it out entirely with both lenses

CURVILINEAR DISTORTION

CANON

	CANON	ZEISS
100mm	100mm	100mm
∞	-0.16%	-0.006%

ZEISS

Thanks to their monofocal status and design, barrel distortion is negligible with the Zeiss lens and is by no means a serious problem with the Canon optic

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Canon
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HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?

Good Spotmatics are fetching higher prices than they were a few years ago, especially if they have SMC lenses and particularly the 50mm f/1.4 SMC Takumar, but they vary dramatically with condition. A nice original Spotmatic with f/1.4 Super-Takumar and case made £90 on eBay on 29 June, whereas another made £47.46 a week earlier. Spotmatic F cameras used to fetch a lot more than earlier Spotmatics but now seem to sell for much the same. The range for a working example seems to extend on eBay from about £25 to £90. Classic camera dealers who check the cameras thoroughly will charge at least 50% more.

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Pentax SL

A Spotmatic with no meter. Chrome, with 55mm f/2 Super-Takumar

Original
Spotmatic
Black, with f/1.4
Super-Takumar

Pentax Spotmatic

Ivor Matanle takes a look at the Pentax Spotmatic with TTL metering

THE ASAHI Pentax Spotmatic made a major impact upon the photographic world when it appeared in 1964, despite not actually being the first through-the-lens (TTL) metering 35mm SLR to hit the market. However, in 1964, Pentax was already one of the world's top SLR brands, far better known and with a far larger advertising budget than Topcon or Alpa whose TTL models preceded the Spotmatic. Thus it was the Spotmatic that became the TTL camera that took Britain's fancy in the mid-1960s, despite offering only stopped-down metering. If you had asked amateur photographers in, say, 1970, which camera was the first to have TTL metering, virtually all would have answered, 'The Pentax Spotmatic.'

Stopped-down metering meant that, to take an exposure reading, the lens aperture had to be temporarily closed to the aperture

at which the photograph was to be taken. So the Spotmatic was equipped with a large black sliding switch on the left-hand side of the mirror box. This was both a meter switch and a means of actuating the pusher plate inside the mirror box to push in the pin on the back of the lens to stop the lens down to the taking aperture. Therein, however, were two of the camera's few weaknesses.

The first was a practical weakness. The switch mechanism was designed in such a way that it stayed activated until the shutter was fired, when the switch automatically returned to the 'off' or 'down' position. Pulling the switch down to the 'off' position manually was possible, but not advisable for mechanical reasons. This meant that if, like me, you normally correct focus as the last act before firing the shutter, you had to make the correction with the lens stopped down to the taking aperture. Asahi designers

had assumed that nobody photographed moving subjects, and that you would first focus, then activate the meter switch, set the exposure and fire the shutter.

The second, mechanical, weakness was, I think, consequent upon the first. This, as has become more apparent with time, was that the sliding meter switch tends to wear out and not work properly. I believe that this extremely common fault occurs because people became impatient with not being able to fine-focus at full aperture, and simply pulled the meter switch down to switch it off and restore full aperture for focusing after setting the exposure.

Although the Spotmatic was designed not only for amateurs but also for the professional market, to capitalise on the substantial reputation among professionals of the Pentax SV, it was the amateur market that espoused through-the-lens metering and the Spotmatic with enthusiasm. Professionals who used Pentax cameras for their 35mm work because of the brilliant performance of the Super-Takumar lenses were distinctly snuffy about

WATCH OUT FOR

Shutter

Spotmatics that have been looked after usually have few faults. Obviously, check all shutter speeds and the condition of the shutter blinds.

Auto diaphragm

Be sure that the auto diaphragm in the lens is operating snappily and has no oil, and check that the focusing screen and mirror are clean and bright.

Meter

The main fault to check for is correct operation of the black sliding meter switch and of the meter itself. Be cautious about buying a Spotmatic with no batteries – the meters can be unreliable. Originally designed to take the PX400 mercury battery, which is now unavailable, Spotmatics can use the Wein cell MRB400, available from The Small Battery Company (tel: 020 8871 3730), which can also offer alternatives.

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE...

A Canon FT with 50mm f/1.8 Canon FL lens



technological developments that made photography easier and reduced the value of their hard-earned skills. Realising that many older amateurs would share this distrust of electronics, Pentax offered alongside the Spotmatic the Pentax SL, which was simply a Spotmatic with no exposure meter. It did not sell well, is now harder to find than a Spotmatic and is usually reckoned to be worth more than the Spotmatic because of its scarcity.

As the name suggests, the Pentax Spotmatic was originally designed to be equipped with a spot meter – that is, an exposure meter with a very narrow angle of acceptance, which therefore measures the reflected light from a small 'spot' within the picture. Asahi apparently decided at the last minute that photographers would find a spot meter confusing, would expose their pictures incorrectly and would blame the camera, thereby getting it a bad reputation. So when the Spotmatic appeared, it kept the distinctive name, but had a CdS (cadmium sulphide) exposure meter with a normal angle of acceptance.

During the 1960s, as other manufacturers improved upon early through-the-lens exposure systems, Asahi began to fall a little behind in the marketplace and the Spotmatic began to seem both a shade expensive and slightly

out of date. As early as 1966, photographic journalists were expecting Pentax to launch an open-aperture metering Spotmatic, and even to abandon the M42 screw mount for a faster-acting bayonet mount.

The competition was increasing. The well-received Canon FT appeared in 1966, with a more selective stop-down TTL metering system and the superb Canon breechlock-mount FL lenses. The Minolta SRT101, a full-aperture TTL camera with a neat, fast-acting bayonet lens mount, also appeared in 1966. The full-aperture TTL Nikkormat FTn was launched in 1967 and, for the professional market, the Nikon Photomic FTn came a year later. All these had bayonet-mount lenses.

By 1970, the Spotmatic seemed obsolescent. Pentax responded, not by announcing a bayonet-mount Spotmatic, which everybody expected, but with very minor upgrades, such as widening the film speed range of the exposure system and adding a hotshoe to the prism. This created the Spotmatic II.

BETTER LENSES

Asahi's market credibility was rescued by the launch in 1971 of its superb SMC (Super Multi Coated) Takumar lenses. These gave improved colour rendition and virtually no flare. SMC Takumars were seriously good, and hold their own even today.

In 1973, Asahi finally launched the Spotmatic F, a full-aperture TTL metering Spotmatic to compete with the Minolta SRT101 of six years earlier, the Nikkormat FTn of five years earlier, the Canon FTb of two years earlier and several other noteworthy cameras. The Spotmatic F revived Asahi's sales and was a successful camera. Thousands still use them, but its success was blighted by its screw lens mount, which, by then, was seen by most as outdated.

RANGE OF LENSES

The 50mm f/1.4 and 55mm f/1.8 and 55mm f/2 lenses were so good by the standards of their time that many users in the 1960s never bought another lens. Most who did bought the 135mm f/3.5 Super-Takumars or 35mm f/3.5 Super-Takumars, which are consequently more common second-hand now than other focal lengths. Nonetheless, a very full range was available. By the 1970s, the wideangle range included SMC Takumars in 20mm f/4.5, 24mm f/3.5, 28mm f/3.5, 35mm f/2 and 35mm f/3.5 specifications.

In the middle range there were 85mm f/1.8 (f/1.9 before 1964), 105mm f/2.8, 120mm f/2.8, 135mm f/3.5 and 150mm f/4 optics. The really long lenses included a 200mm f/4, a 300mm f/4, a compact 400mm f/5.6, a 500mm f/4.5, and a



1,000mm f/8. There was also an 85-200mm zoom.

Macro lenses included the 50mm f/4 SMC Macro-Takumar and the 100mm f/4 SMC Macro-Takumar.

ACCESSORIES

The Pentax Spotmatic accessories range was broadly comparable with the other major brands of the 1960s and '70s. There was a full motordrive system, which seems only to have been usable with a special version of the Spotmatic II marketed as the Pentax Spotmatic Motor Drive. There were also close-up accessories, including bellows units, close-up lenses and extension tubes, a Copipod portable copying stand with calibrated telescoping legs and adapter rings, and a right-angle finder that was ideal for when the camera was on the Copipod. There was a 2x eyepiece magnifier, a prescription lens holder for eyesight correction, a clip-on accessory shoe and a stereo (3D) adapter,

plus the usual range of filters and hoods for all the lenses.

SPOTMATIC IN USE

Although I prefer the handling and balance of the SV, S1a and earlier models, I have owned several Spotmatics over the years. Any Spotmatic in sound condition is a joy to use and is capable of superb results. A number of repairers work on them, but I use Ed Trzoska in Leicester (tel: 0116 267 4247).

PENTAX HISTORY

After the Asahiflex series of SLRs with a 37mm screw lens mount (1951-1957), which were never officially imported into Britain, Asahi produced the original Pentax in 1957, with a fixed pentaprism, lever wind, a cloth horizontally running focal-plane shutter, a folding rewind crank and Takumar lenses with the 42mm screw mount. Four versions of this camera, with the slow speeds set by a knob on the front, like a Leica, were produced, although none was exported to Britain.

The M42 screw mount was already well known in the USA and Europe as the lens mount of the East German Zeiss, later Pentacon, series of Contax S, Contax D and Pentacon SLRs. It was at that time variously known as the Praktica mount or the Edixa mount. When the original Pentax appeared, Asahi adopted the well-known M42 mount. By the time I wanted, but could not afford, a Pentax SV in about 1963, the M42 mount was known almost universally in Britain as the Pentax mount.

However, the key historical point that people who like these nice old cameras often miss, particularly if they are British, is that the original Pentax pre-dated the Nikon F and the Minolta SR2 by a year and two years respectively. While the Miranda appeared even earlier than that, its lenses and viewfinders lacked the brilliance that made the Pentax so special. The first Pentax was a true landmark in photographic history, and the Spotmatic repeated that achievement in 1964. **AP**

1951-7	Asahiflex series of cameras
1957	Original Pentax and Pentax S
1958	Pentax K
1961	Pentax S2
1962	Pentax SV and S1a
1964	Pentax Spotmatic announced
1965	Pentax SL
1970	Upgrade to Spotmatic II. Launch of SMC Takumar lenses
1973	Full-aperture TTL Spotmatic F

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SIGMA 105 MICRO CA/F/AF/S/ONY	Flow	HASSEL 250mm FE/ASNEW	£895-£1695	ROLLEIFLEX-19 1992-CASED CAP	£995
MOST NIKON/CAON LENSES & ACCS	Flow	HASSELNET M2450 TL FLASH	£ask	ROLLEIFLEX WIDE ANGLE/L	£NEG
KENKO PRO-300 1.4x2x ND	Flow	HASSEL 1100G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-35 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL MEDIUM	Flow	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-50 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
HASSEL H30-119 39MP/(SPECIAL)	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-75 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
HASSEL 38MP BACK ANY FIT	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-100 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
LEAF ATTUS 65/75/(SPECIAL)	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-120 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
RODENSTOK 45mm 14.5 COPAL	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-150 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
APOL-DIGITAR 25mm 120mm IRIS/COPAL	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-180 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
DIGITAL 60,80,90,100mm-100mm-ELECTRON	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-210 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
SHUTTER 100mm 100mm-100mm	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-240 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
LEAF/ROLLEIF6008 40/80/100mm	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-250 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
LEAF/ROLLEIF55mmTILT&SHIFT	ENEG	HASSEL 1000G COMP/ASNEW	£1145	ROLLEIFLEX-280 GERMAN BOXED/NEW	£795
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Live View	✓	Card Type	SD

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T009 Colour	£24.99 65ml	£3.99 70ml, 3 for £10.99	Photo 900, 1270, 1290
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T036 Black	£19.99 10ml	£3.99 13ml, 3 for £10.99	C42, C44, C46
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T041 Colour	£19.99 37ml	£4.99 46ml, 3 for £13.99	C62, CX3200
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T051 Black	£19.99 24ml	£3.99 26ml, 3 for £7.99	740, 760, 800, 850, 860, 1160
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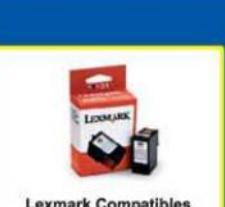
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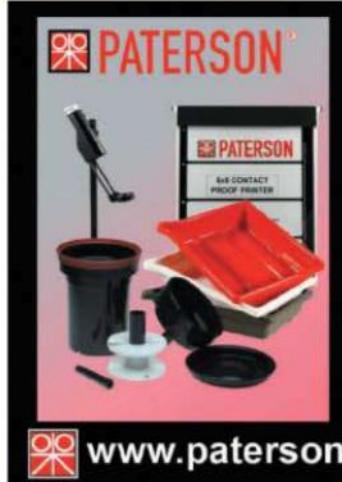
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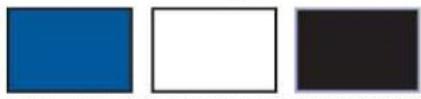
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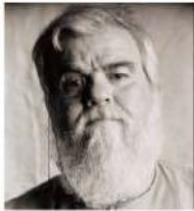
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ROGER HICKS

The bourgeois is the epitome of the good as well as the bad. Let us embrace our label

THE FRENCH divide the bourgeoisie into at least three categories: *petit bourgeois*, *bon bourgeois* and *grand bourgeois*. The first are the small shopkeepers and successful tradesmen. The second are what in England used to be called the middle class, until everyone decided they were middle class. And the third, bluntly, are the rich.

Now, the bourgeois have always been a soft target, and in certain sectors of society, to declare any admiration at all for them is on a par with advocating the torture of kittens or supporting adventurist wars. In general, though, I rather like the bourgeoisie. They are an historic improvement over both a stolid and unimaginative peasantry, and an aristocracy that all too often had (and still has) excessive opinions of its own abilities and worth.

Why, then, have the bourgeois such a bad image? By reputation they are stuffy, conventional and scarcely more imaginative than the peasantry, proletariat or aristocracy from which their ancestors sprang. I suspect, though, that the exact opposite is true today. Now, the bourgeois are the avant-garde.

Any generalisation about the bourgeoisie normally refers only to a small sector of that massive slice of the population, and our preconceptions are heavily shaded by the Marxist adoption of 'bourgeois' as a blanket term of abuse. Marx, after all, claimed that as well as ruthlessly exploiting their employees, the bourgeois also found it capital fun to seduce one another's wives. Hold on a minute! If this isn't a small sector of the bourgeoisie, what is? And how are peasants, proletarians and aristocrats different?

It is entirely true that the bourgeoisie can be foolish, fad-ridden and easily led. A glance at a Sunday broadsheet newspaper, with its endless supplements and its emphasis on relentless consumerism, illustrates this clearly enough. But then, read the same newspaper for the reviews of the arts, the summaries of the sciences, the analyses of the political scene. If the bourgeoisie weren't paying for all this stuff – the arts, the sciences and the politics, never mind the journalistic glosses thereon – then who would pay for them? And who goes to photographic exhibitions to look at the pictures? The bourgeois. When you meet the photographers who produced the pictures that hang on the walls of the galleries, the vast majority of the time, they turn out to be bourgeois too.

The bourgeois is the epitome of the good as well

as the bad, and as for the time-honoured game of shocking the stuffier bourgeois, *épater les bourgeois*, why, who does this with more enthusiasm than the bourgeois himself? Unless, perhaps, it be his son or daughter, whose principal concern is to shock not the bourgeoisie in general, but to shock daddy in particular. Or to shock mummy, unless she, the oft-maligned bourgeoisie, is out to do a bit of shocking on her own account.

Of course, 'bourgeois photography' is an easy sneer to direct at camera clubs, and, let's be honest, some camera clubs are very easy to sneer at. But there are plenty who dismiss all photography as bourgeois (in an insulting sense), save that which is rarefied beyond belief and has disappeared in a swirl of that incomprehensible dialect spoken only by art critics. Others dismiss campaigning or crusading photography, such

things as the recording of war zones or Romanian orphanages, or the plight of girls denied education, as bourgeois salves for a bourgeois conscience.

Whence, however, do these self-proclaimed experts spring? From the bourgeoisie! Most certainly not from the peasantry, proletariat or aristocracy, so what's left? But because they can borrow a general-purpose insult from the invective of a discredited political system, they manage to make themselves feel superior.

In other words, 'bourgeois' as an insult is almost entirely hurled within the bourgeoisie: 'You are more bourgeois than I am, and therefore small-minded and ignorant.' As such, it has become as meaningless as 'middle class', which pretty much describes the same people anyway.

Because the word has become completely meaningless, it seems fair to me that it is up for grabs, and that there is absolutely no reason why it should not be turned around to mean the exact opposite of its meaning at the moment. In this sense, 'bourgeois photography' (or indeed bourgeois art in general) can be taken to mean progressive, thoughtful, experimental, technically accomplished and aesthetically varied. Are the photographs in AP bourgeois? Of course they are. This means that some of them are good, some of them are bad, and some are indifferent. The point is, it makes more sense to analyse them as photographs, rather than according to outmoded political preconceptions. **AP**

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com.

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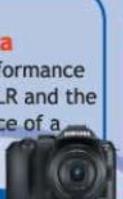


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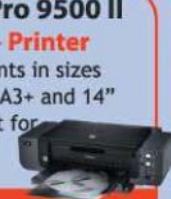
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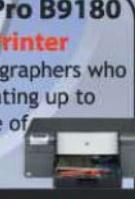
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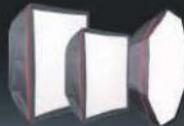
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